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UNCANNY

# MYSTERIES

## WEIRD *and* STRANGE



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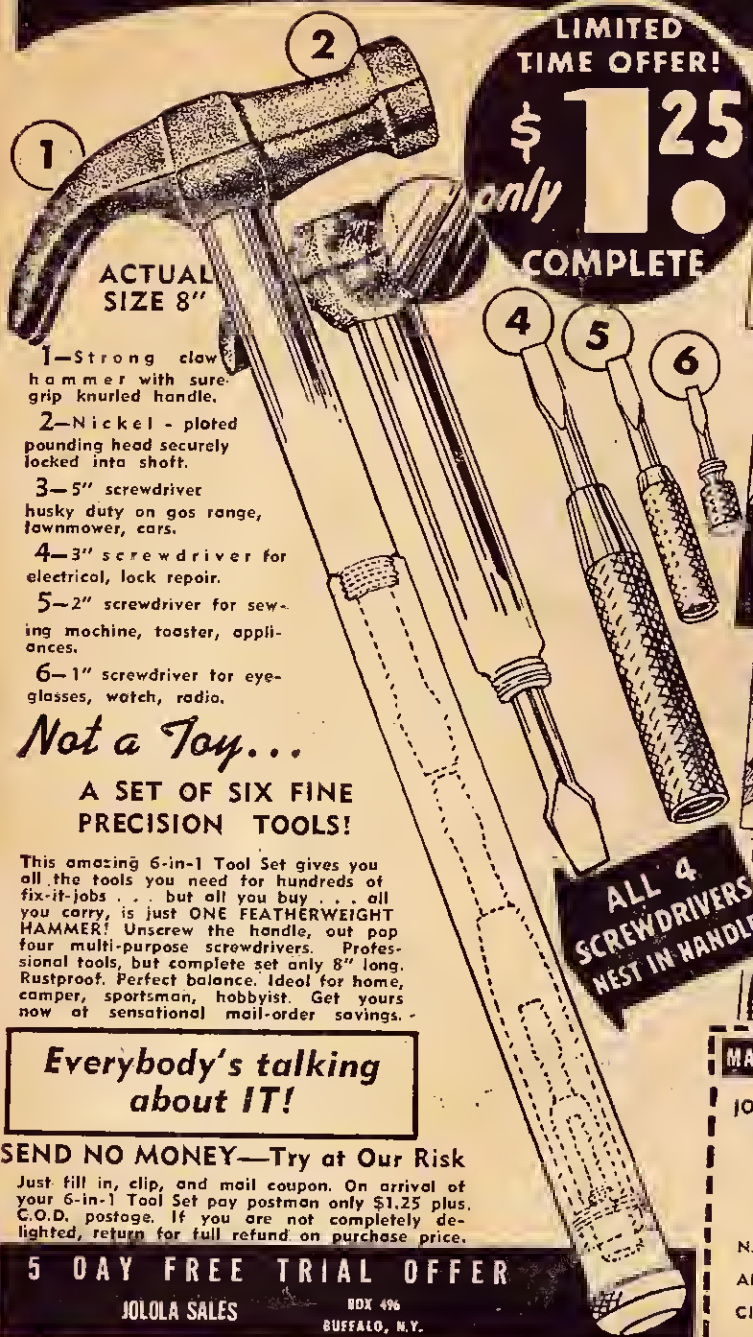
**MONSTERS THREE**  
The **SCREAMING ROOM**  
**SWAMP HORROR**  
**REVENGE in**  
**SMALL FORM**





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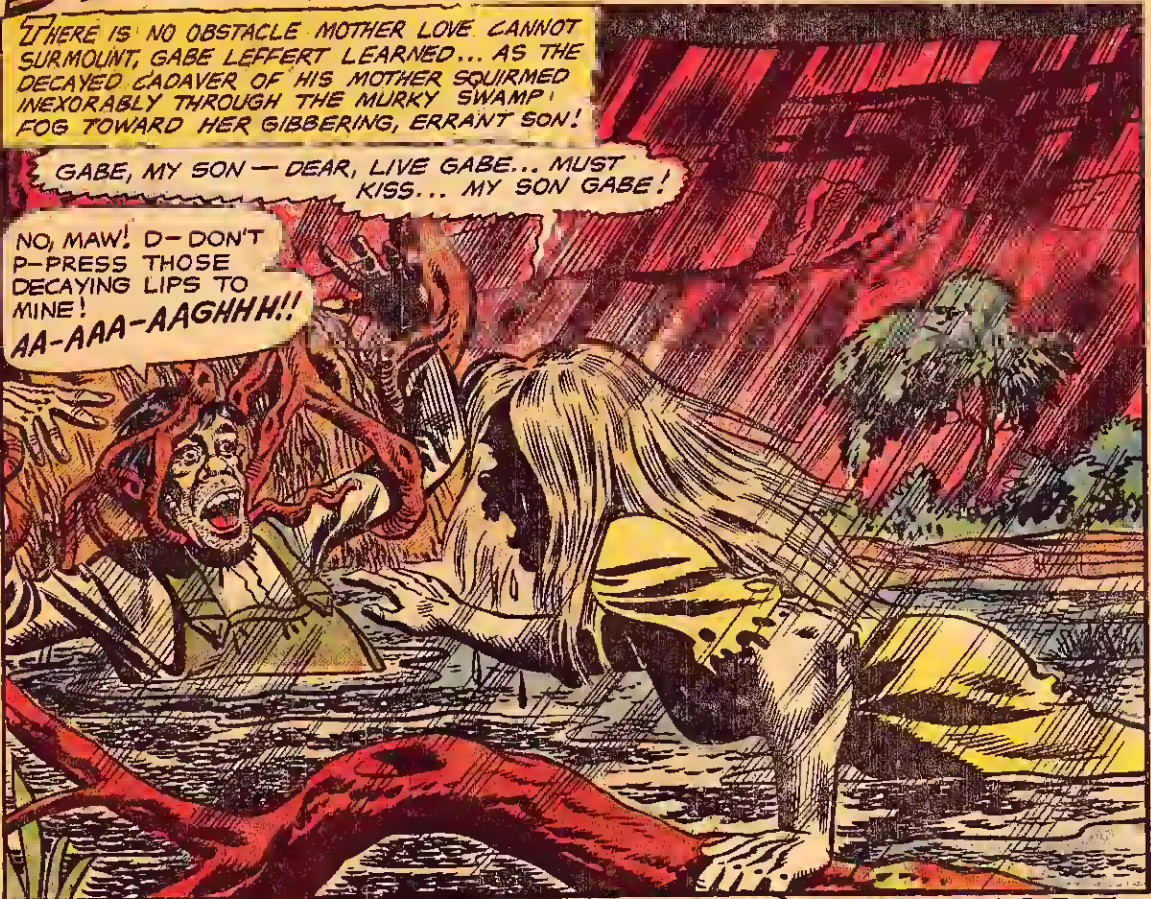
MYSTERIES

# SWAMP HORROR

THERE IS NO OBSTACLE MOTHER LOVE CANNOT SURMOUNT, GABE LEFFERT LEARNED... AS THE DECAYED CADAVER OF HIS MOTHER SQUIRMED INEXORABLY THROUGH THE MURKY SWAMP! FOG TOWARD HER GIBBERING, ERRANT SON!

GABE, MY SON — DEAR, LIVE GABE... MUST KISS... MY SON GABE!

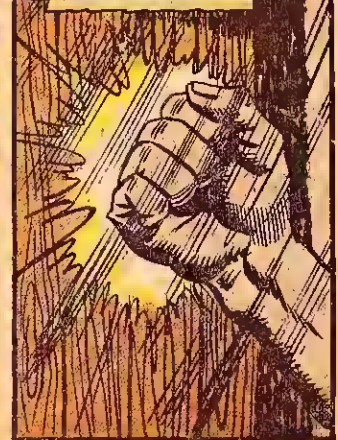
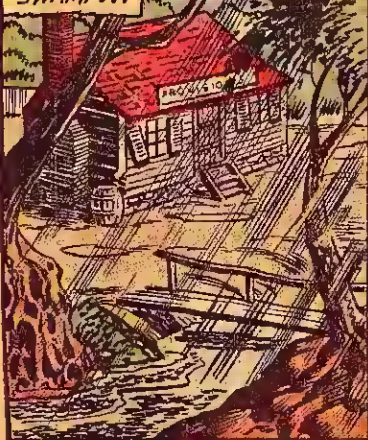
NO, MAW! D—DON'T P—PRESS THOSE DECAYING LIPS TO MINE!  
AA—AAA—AAGHHH!!



GABRIEL LEFFERT'S GHASTLY FATE HAD ITS BEGINNING ONE STORMY, DISMAL NIGHT AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LOCK UP HIS PROVISIONS STORE ON THE EDGE OF AN ISOLATED, TREACHEROUS LOUISIANA SWAMP...

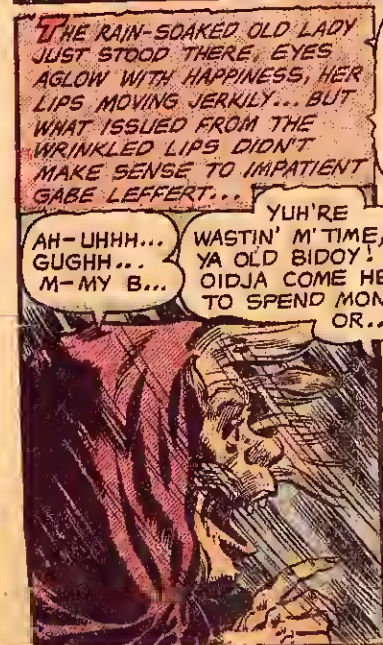
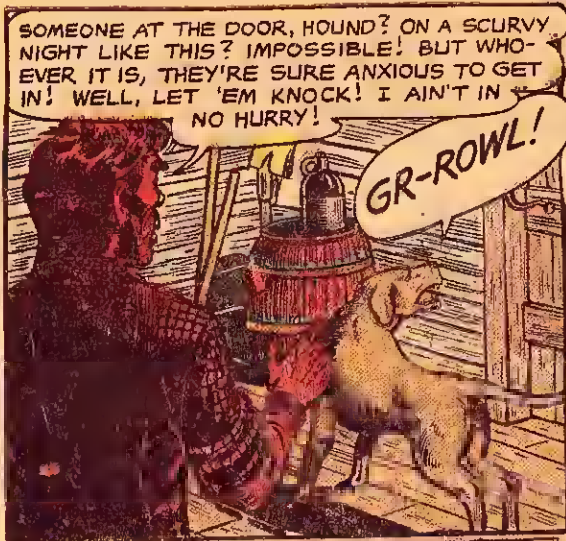
BLASTED RAIN... POURING, POURING WITHOUT LET-UP! I'LL CLOSE FOR THE NIGHT... WON'T EARN ONE CONSERVED CENT IN THIS WEATHER. NOBODY IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULD VENTURE OUT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, BLAST TH' ROTTEN LUCK!

AND THEN IT CAME... A MEASURED KNOCKING ON THE RICKETY DOOR... A PERSISTENT KNOCKING THAT CAME AGAIN, AGAIN, AND YET AGAIN, WITH ALMOST MECHANICAL REGULARITY...

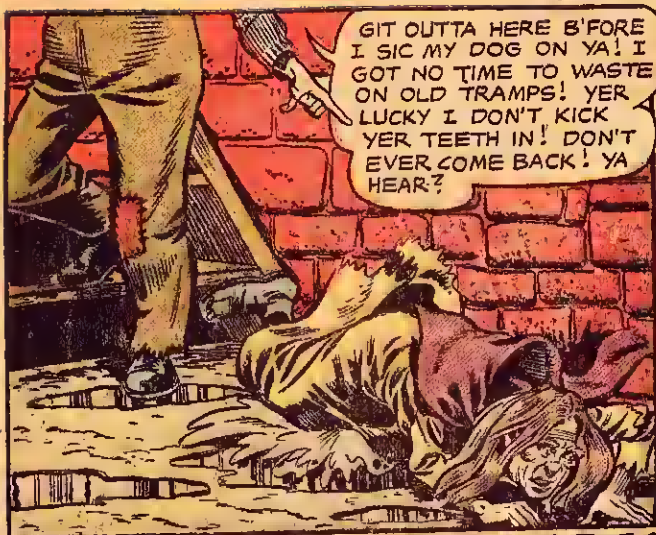




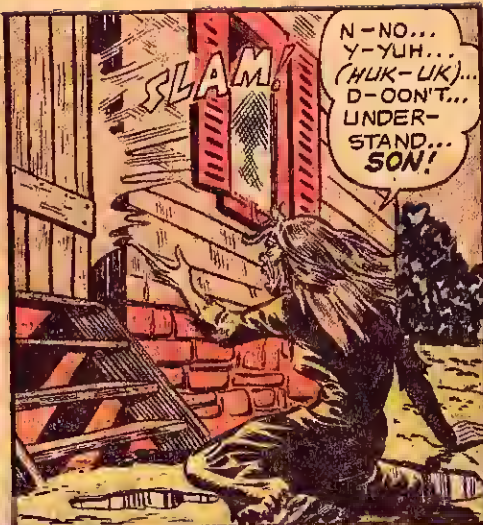
# MYSTERIES







GIT OUTTA HERE B'FORE  
I SIC MY DOG ON YA! I  
GOT NO TIME TO WASTE  
ON OLD TRAMPS! YER  
LUCKY I DON'T KICK  
YER TEETH IN! DON'T  
EVER COME BACK! YA  
HEAR?



N-NO...  
Y-YUH...  
(HUK-LIK)...  
D-OON'T...  
UNDER-  
STAND...  
SON!



I'M YORE MAW... COME  
BACK... (HUK-KKK)... FUM  
TH' CRAZY-HOUSE... AFTER  
ALL THESE Y'ARS! DON'TCHA  
KNOW Y'OWN MAW, CHILD?

THE OLD CRONE'S SCREAMS  
ARE DROWNED OUT BY THE  
WHISTLING WIND AS THE  
SWAMP STORM INCREASES  
IN FURY...

LEMME IN... GABE! IT'S ME...  
YORE MAW! LEMME IN!  
LEMME... IN! DON'T DO THIS  
TO YORE POOR OL' MAW...



BUT GABE HAS RETIRED TO HIS  
FILTHY ROOM IN THE BACK OF  
THE STORE. HE UNDRASSES...  
SCRATCHES... YAWNS SLEEPILY...

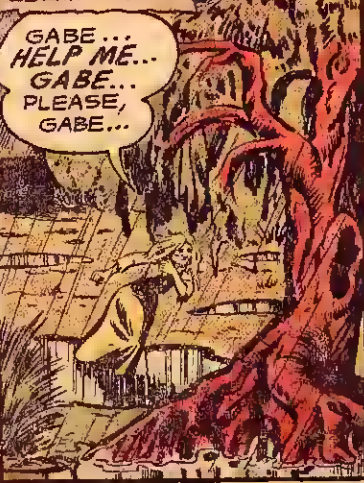


HA! HA! I SHORE GOT  
RID O' HER PRONTO,  
I DID!  
HA! HA!

INSTANTS LATER, HE PEACE-  
FULLY SNORES... AND IN HIS  
SLEEP... HE TURNS AND  
SCRATCHES HIS HIDE  
LAZILY...



WHILE, OUTSIDE... HIS MOTHER  
STAGGERS AND STUMBLES, AT  
THE MERCY OF THE CRUEL  
ELEMENTS...



GABE...  
HELP ME...  
GABE...  
PLEASE,  
GABE...

...UNTIL — SHE DIES...





# MYSTERIES



**THE BODY WAS FOUND THE VERY NEXT MORNING...**

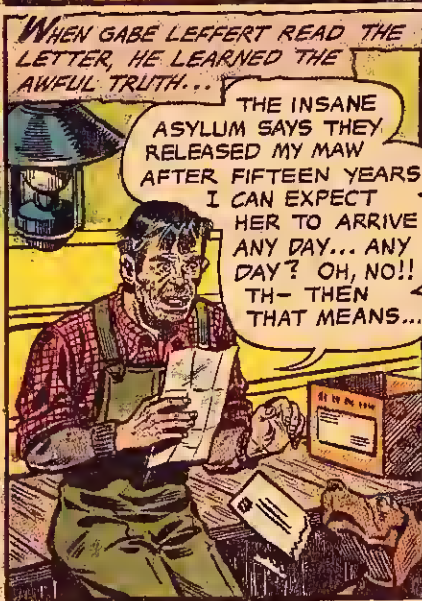
SHE WAS A STRANGER IN THESE PARTS. EVER SEE HER BEFORE, GABE?

NOPE.

WHY ADMIT IT? NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW!

BESIDES, WHAT IF SHE DID DIE? SHE WAS JUST A DIRTY OLD TRAMP. SHE WAS NOTHIN' TO ME... NOTHIN'...

YOUR MAIL, GABE. HOW'S THINGS IN THE STORE?



**WHEN GABE LEFFERT READ THE LETTER, HE LEARNED THE AWFUL TRUTH...**

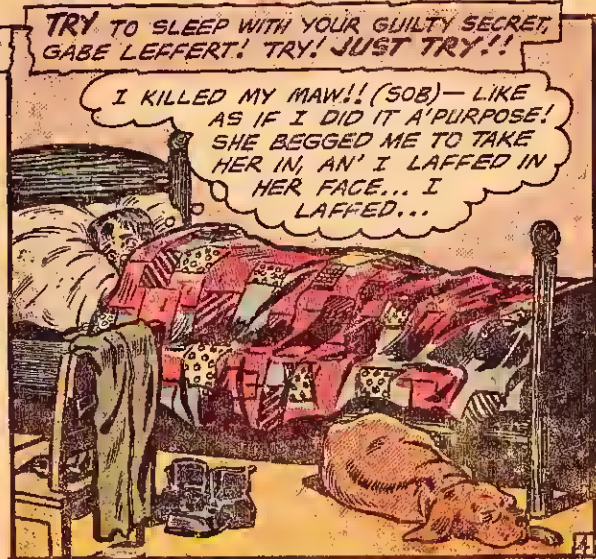
THE INSANE ASYLUM SAYS THEY RELEASED MY MAW AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS I CAN EXPECT HER TO ARRIVE ANY DAY... ANY DAY? OH, NO!! TH- THEN THAT MEANS...

**GOOD HEAVENS! TH- THE OLD HAG WAS HER! THAT'S WHAT SHE WAS TRYIN' TA TELL ME! I I'VE KILLED M' OWN MAW! SHE'D CHANGED SO, I DIDN'T KNOW HER!**

A SIN... A TERRIBLE SIN, THAT'S WHAT IT IS! IF FOLKS AROUND HERE'D KNOW TH' TRUTH, THEY'D SKIN ME ALIVE... OR TAR-'N FEATHER ME! NO ONE MUST EVER **KNOW!**



**YES, GABE! NO ONE MUST EVER KNOW! BUT YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU, GABE LEFFERT? YOU KNOW A HIDEOUS SECRET CERTAIN TO DRIVE ANY MAN STARK, RAVING MAD!**



**TRY TO SLEEP WITH YOUR GUILTY SECRET, GABE LEFFERT! TRY! JUST TRY!!**

I KILLED MY MAW!! (SOB)— LIKE AS IF I DID IT A'PURPOSE! SHE BEGGED ME TO TAKE HER IN, AN' I LAFFED IN HER FACE... I LAFFED...



# MYSTERIES

GABE BECAME A CHANGED MAN. HE GREW GAUNT, JITTERY, HOLLOW-EYED, SILENT. AND ALWAYS HE FEARED THE NIGHT, WITH ITS MEMORIES THAT CREEPED INSIDIOUSLY IN THE DARK... SLITHERING FROM SHADOW TO SHADOW... EATING INTO HIS SCREAMING CONSCIOUSNESS...

AWFUL WEATHER, AIN'T IT? JUST LIKE ON THE NIGHT THAT UNIDENTIFIED OLD LADY DIED IN TH' STORM...

GET OUT OF HERE! CURSE YA! I DON'T HAFTA LISTEN TO YOU!

GET OUT... OR I'LL KILL YOU! YA HEARD ME! LEMME ALONE! GET OUT!!

YUH GONE DAFFY? IT'LL BE A LONG TIME B'FORE I COME BACK, GABE LEFFERT!

AS HE LOCKS THE DOOR, GABE LOOKS IN IRRITATION AT HIS HOWLING DOG...

OW-OO-000-

IT'S JUST LIKE THAT NIGHT! HEY! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, DOG? STOP THAT HOWLING...

I SAID STOP IT! I OUGHTA KICK YER HEAD IN! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKIN' AT THE WINDOW FOR? HUH? WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU, YUH DUMB MUTT?

YA-AAAA! IT-IT'S MAW!!

NO MISTAKING THAT HORRIBLY DECAYED, YET LOVING FACE AT THE WINDOW! IT WAS HIS MOTHER! BUT SHE WAS DEAD! HOW COULD THIS BE, THEN? YET THERE SHE WAS... AT... HIS... WINDOW...

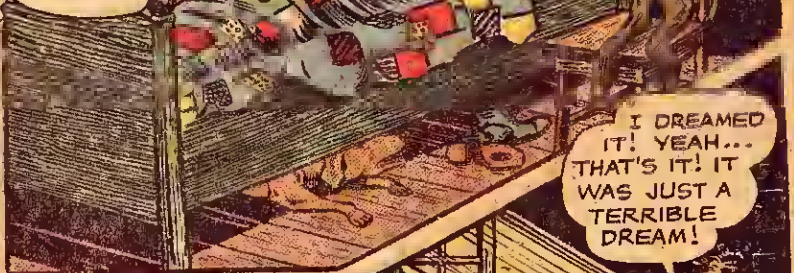
GO AWAY! IN TH' NAME OF ALL THAT'S SANE... G-GO AWAY!! I DON'T WANNA SEE YA! GO BACK T'YORE GRAVE!!



LET ME IN, SON! LET ME IN  
OUT OF THE STORM! LET ME  
HOLD YOU... LIKE I USED TO  
DO... REMEMBER HOW I USED  
T'HOLD YA TIGHT WHEN Y'WAS  
SMALL... AN' CROON A  
LULLABY? LET YORE DARLIN'  
MAW IN!!



IT'S CRAZY! I WON'T  
LISTEN! GO AWAY!  
GO AWAY! GO AWAY!  
IT'S THE DEVIL'S  
WORK! GIT AWAY  
FUM ME!



I DREAMED  
IT! YEAH...  
THAT'S IT! IT  
WAS JUST A  
TERRIBLE  
DREAM!

THE HEARTBREAKING PLEAS...  
AND HIS SCREAMED REBUFS...  
CONTINUED UNTIL DAWN,  
WHEN THE CORPSE  
STALKED OFF INTO  
THE MISTS FROM  
WHENCE IT CAME...

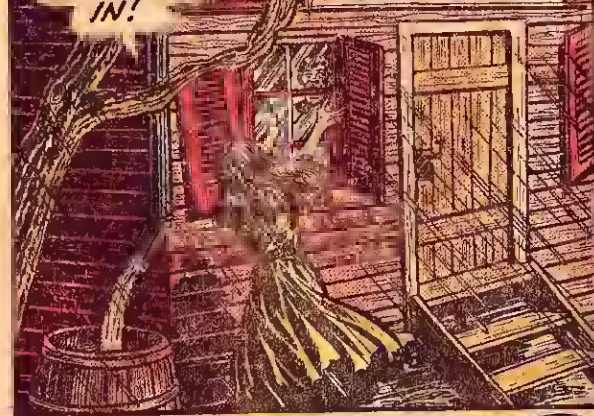


BUT... THAT NIGHT...

I WANT TO GO  
IN! LEMME  
IN!

N-NO! NOT  
AGAIN!!

PROVISIONS



THE  
DISMAL  
TORRENT  
CONTINUED...  
ENDLESSLY...  
AND EACH  
NIGHT,  
GABE'S  
GHASTLY  
VISITOR,  
CAME  
AGAIN  
AND  
AGAIN  
AND  
AGAIN...

PLEASE GO!  
MAW, IF YA STILL  
LOVE ME! FORGIVE  
ME AN' GO  
BACK!

NO! I WILL NOT  
GO! I'M STAYIN'  
HERE WITH  
YOU! NOTHIN'  
KIN MAKE ME  
LEAVE!

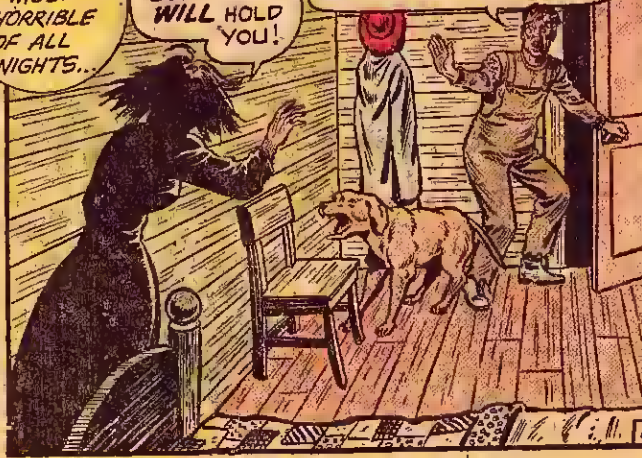
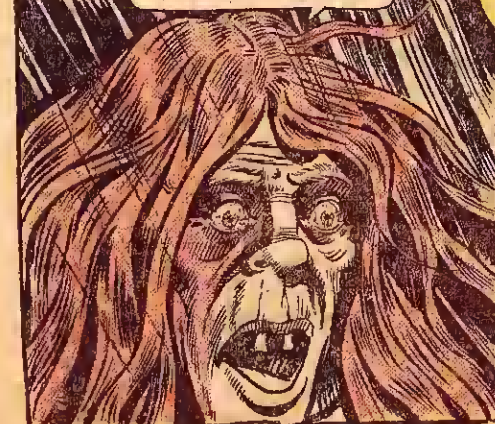


I WANT TO HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS  
AGAIN! YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO CHEAT  
ME OF MY LOVE! DEAD OR ALIVE,  
IT'S MY RIGHT!

AND  
THEN,  
MOST  
HORRIBLE  
OF ALL  
NIGHTS...

I MUST  
HOLD YOU,  
SON! I  
WILL HOLD  
YOU!

SHE'S COMING IN AFTER  
ME! YAAA-AAA-AAA!  
HELP ME, DOG! HELP!!





# MYSTERIES

FRIGHTENED, BUT FAITHFUL, THE HOUND-DOG LEAPS AT THE SUPERNATURAL INVADER. SKELETONAL TALONS DIG INTO THE BEAST'S THROAT...

VII-IIIPE!

SECONDS LATER, THE CANINE CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR... DEAD!

SON! SON! WAIT FOR MAMA! (HUK-KK! HUK-KK!) KISS ME! KISS MY DECAYING, ROTTING LIPS!

OUT INTO THE STORM STUMBLES AND RUNS GABE. BEHIND HIM, CHARGES HIS GRISLY PURSUER...

I'M COMING, GABE! WAIT FOR ME! WAIT!! WAIT, CHILD!

AI-IEEE!

INTO THE TREACHEROUS SWAMP THRESHES GABE... SLIPPING, SPLASHING, RUNNING IN A FRENZY OF FRIGHT...

SHE'S C-CATCHING UP!

THEN HE SLID INTO THE VINES... AND BECAME HOPELESSLY ENTANGLED AS THE WATERS ROSE...

AT LAST! AT LAST!

N-NO, MAW! KEEP AWAY, MAW! P-PLEASE! PLEASE!

MAW! MAW-WWWW! YOU'RE CRR-RRUSHING M-MY RIBS! STOP! STOPPPP, MAW-WW!

EEEEAAAAA!!

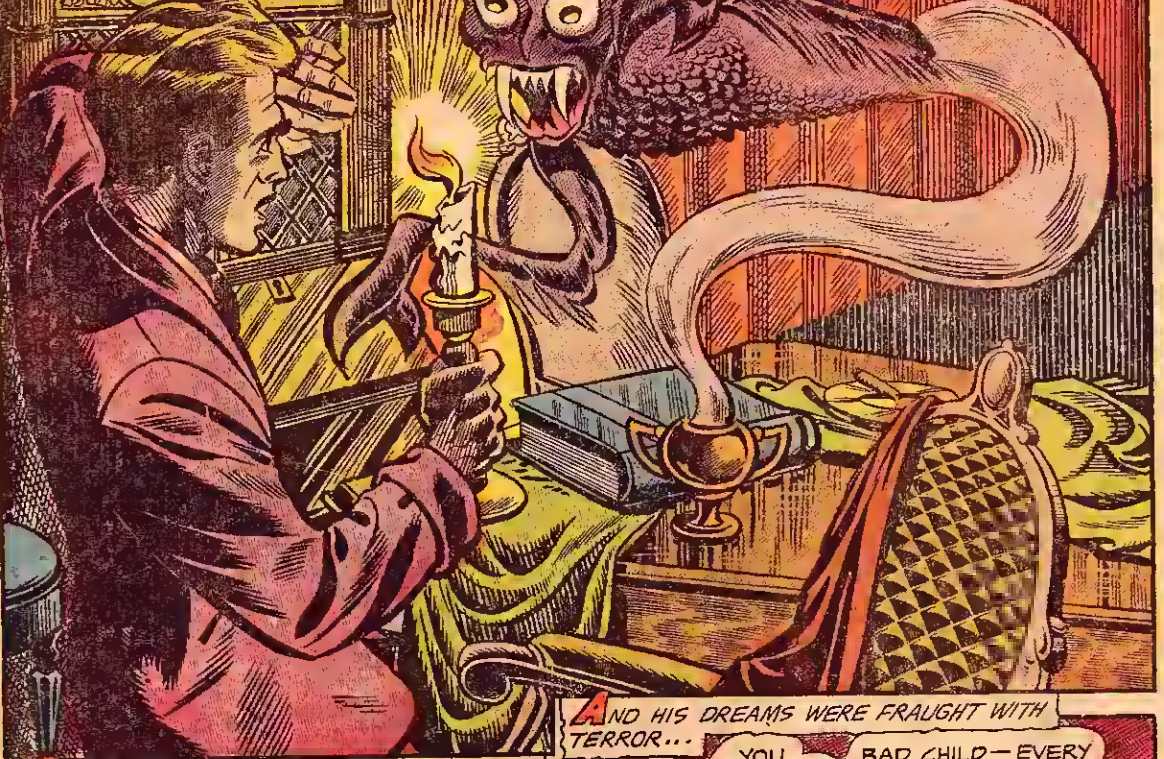
AND SO... MOTHER AND SON... WERE FINALLY RE-UNITED... IN DEATH!

The End



**F**ROM WARPED BOY TO WARPED MAN—THAT WAS THE PATHETIC HISTORY OF JERRY MOORE. ALWAYS THE GOOD THINGS OF LIFE WERE SNATCHED FROM HIM, LEAVING HIM FRUSTRATED AND FULL OF HATE AND FEAR OF THE WORLD AND THE PEOPLE IN IT! THEN CAME A GREAT AND TERRIBLE CHANGE IN THE LIFE OF THIS LITTLE WORM OF A MAN—HE FOUND THAT HE COULD SIN WITHOUT PAYING THE PIPER! PERFECT FREEDOM WAS HIS—UNTIL HE DISCOVERED THE DREAD SECRET OF THE VESSEL OF SIN...

# The SCREAMING ROOM



**A**ND HIS DREAMS WERE FRAUGHT WITH TERROR...

**J**ERRY LEARNED ABOUT "SIN" EARLY AND OFTEN...

NO, PAPA! PLEASE DON'T STRAP ME AGAIN! I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT!

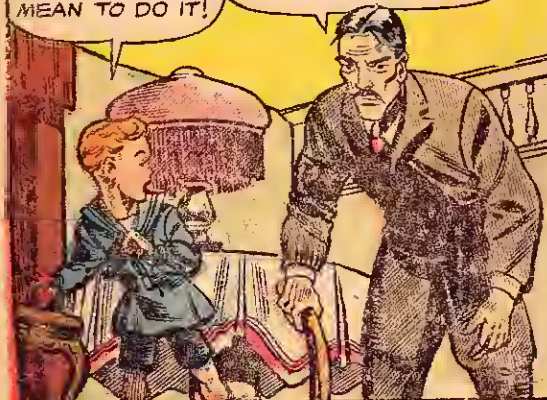
BUT YOU DID! YOU STOLE SOME COOKIES—AND YOU MUST BE PUNISHED! NOW COME HERE!

WICKED BOY!

YOU SHALL BE PUNISHED!

BAD CHILD—EVERY SIN MUST BE ATONED FOR!

NO! I—PLEASE, DON'T!





# MYSTERIES

SO THAT WHEN JERRY GREW UP IT WAS ONLY NATURAL HE SHOULD BE REPRESSED AND TIMID—AFRAID OF HIS SHADOW...

GOSH, LOOK AT THOSE TWO—SO HAPPY! I WISH I—BUT PAPA ALWAYS SAID IT WAS WRONG TO GO WITH GIRLS!

DARLING—I HAD SUCH A MARVELOUS TIME!

ME TOO!

Cafe Lou

I—I'VE NEVER EVEN KISSED A GIRL! MOTHER SAID IT WAS A SIN AND THAT I WOULD BE PUNISHED!

JERRY SPENDS HIS DAYS IN ANOTHER SORT OF CAGE—COUNTING OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY...

LET ME HAVE A THOUSAND—IN HUNDREDS!

FAT PIG! IF ONLY I HAD A LITTLE MONEY! BUT EVEN THEN I'D BE AFRAID TO SPEND IT!

THAT NIGHT AT CLOSING TIME, JERRY HAS STRANGE AND FRIGHTENING THOUGHTS...

ALL THIS LOVELY MONEY! IF ONLY I DARED—BUT I MUSTN'T THINK ABOUT STEALING, I MUSTN'T! IT'S A DEADLY SIN AND I WOULD BE TERRIBLY PUNISHED!

LATER...

WELL, IF IT AIN'T MOTHER'S LITTLE BOY! HOW MUCH DOUGH DID YA TAKE TODAY, SONNY?

HA-HA—THAT'S GOOD! JERRY WOULDN'T SWAT A FLY!

HOW I

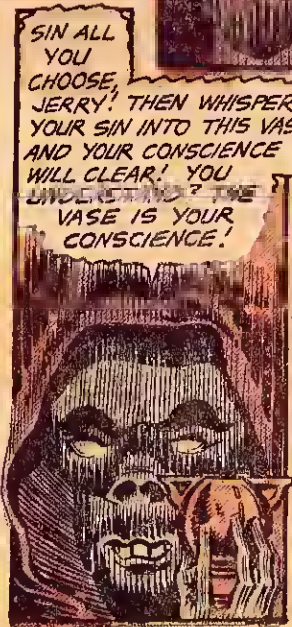
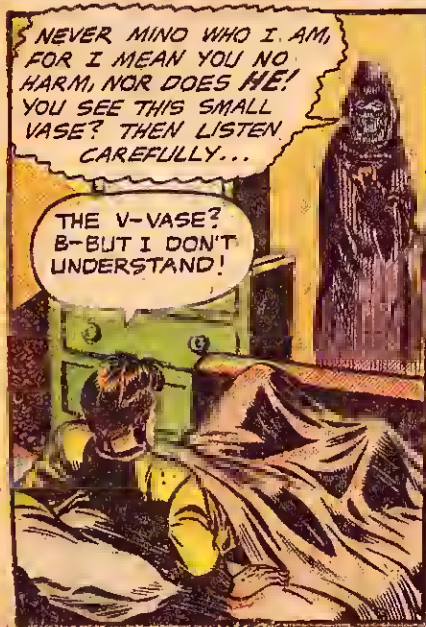
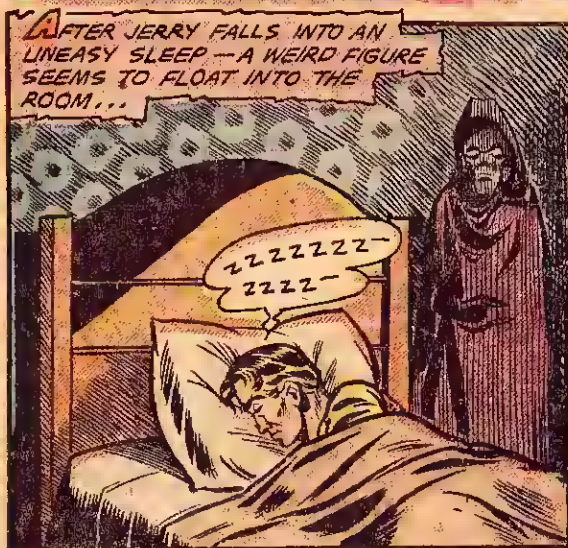
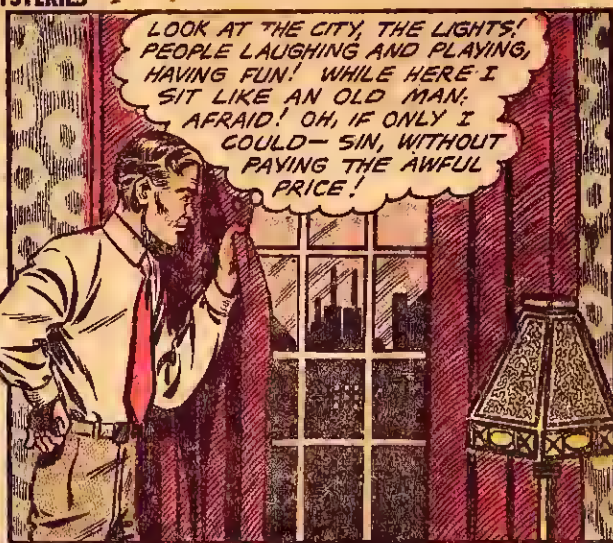
HATE THEM!

B—BUT IT'S A SIN EVEN TO HATE!

HO-HO—DON'T FORGET TO WEAR YOUR RUBBERS, FAUNTLEROY! AND DON'T LET ANY BAD MANS GIVE YOU ANY WOODEN NICKELS! HA-HA-HA!

THAT LOUD MOUTH BILL TALBOT! HE'S THE WORST! I'D LIKE TO KILL HIM!







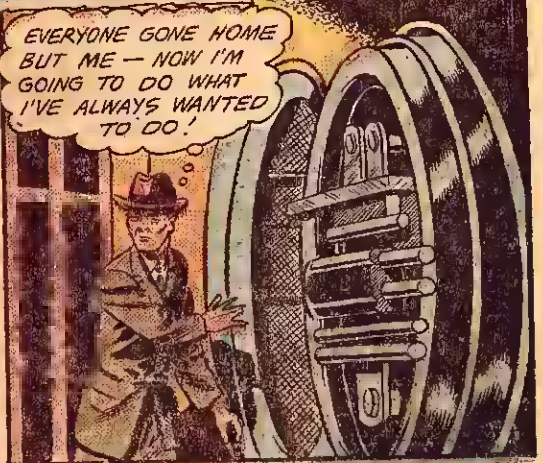
WHEN JERRY AWAKENS NEXT MORNING...



AS JERRY HURRIES TO WORK, HE MAKES A TERRIBLE DECISION...



AT CLOSING TIME...



SPEEDILY...



BACK AT HIS APARTMENT, JERRY CARRIES OUT HIS WEIRD INSTRUCTIONS...



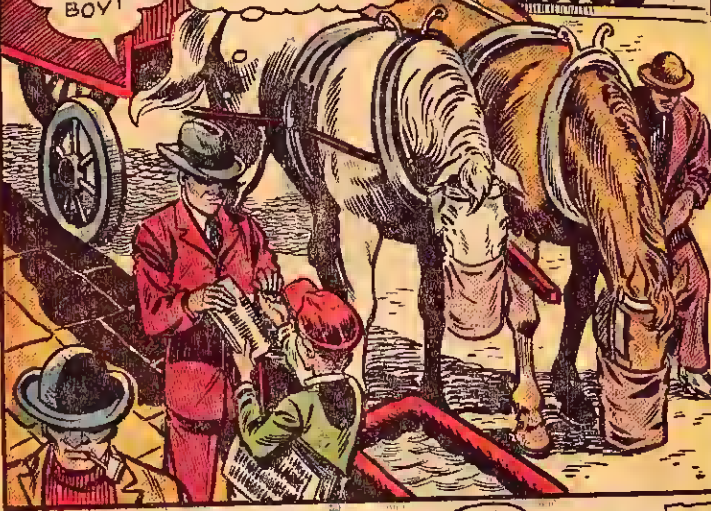


# MYSTERIES

**B**UT NEVERTHELESS JERRY IS FEARFUL AS HE GOES TO WORK NEXT MORNING...

GIVE ME A PAPER, BOY!

ANYTHING TO KILL A LITTLE TIME!



WHAT! GREAT SCOTT! THAT'S OUR BANK! OLD MAN HUMPHRIES SHOT HIMSELF LAST NIGHT!



WHILE ALL DAY, JERRY CHORTLES GLEEFULLY IN HIS CAGE...

LATER AT THE BANK...

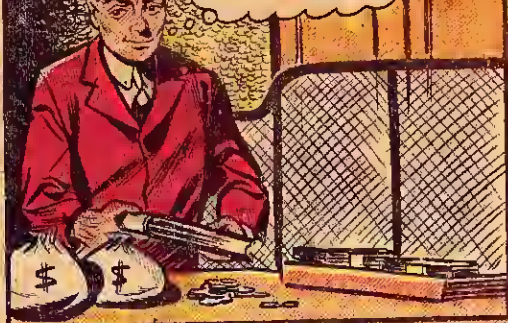
I, A-HEM, THINK YOU MEN DESERVE AN EXPLANATION! NONE OF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN ANY WAY! THE HEAD TELLER HAS BEEN STEALING FUNDS FOR MONTHS, AND—WELL, YOU KNOW THE REST! THAT WILL BE ALL!

THANK YOU, SIR!

SORRY ABOUT IT, SIR!



HA-HA—WHAT A JOB THE VASE DID FOR ME! OLD HUMPHRIES GOT THE BLAME FOR WHAT I STOLE! THEY'LL NEVER SUSPECT ME!



WEEKS PASS AND ONE EVENING...

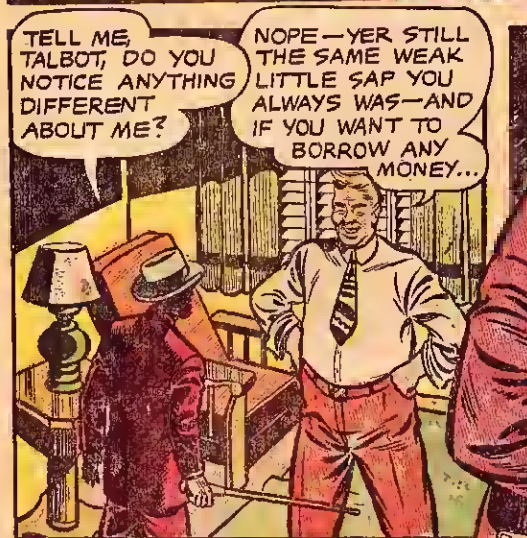
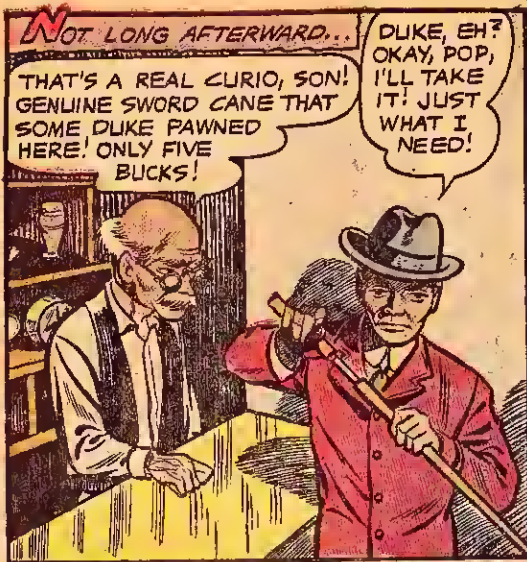
THE VASE HAS BEEN DOING A SWELL JOB! BUT NOW I'VE GOT MORE WORK FOR IT! IT'S ABOUT TIME I GOT EVEN WITH THAT BULLY, BILL TALBOT!

I NEVER DID KNOW WHERE THE FOOL LIVED, AND I MUST KNOW IF I'M—(CHUCKLE)—GOING TO TAKE CARE OF HIM AS HE DESERVES!

SO— HE LIVES IN THAT BOARDING, HOUSE, EH? GOOD! I'LL HAVE SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL TO WHISPER INTO MY LITTLE VASE TONIGHT!









# MYSTERIES

SO THE YEARS PASS AND JERRY MOORE GROWS EVER MORE WEALTHY AND DISSIPATED! THERE IS NOTHING HE WILL NOT, AND HE CANNOT DO! HIS BLACKEST CRIMES LEAVE HIM AS SOON AS HE WHISPERS THEM INTO THE VASE! THEN ONE NIGHT THE END BEGINS...



I HOPE THIS PLACE SUITS YOU, GWEN! YOU'VE BEEN AWFULLY JUMPY LATELY!

MY NERVES, DARLING!

HELLO, MR. MOORE!

BUT LATER THERE IS A BITTER QUARREL...

YOU'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE AN ICEBERG FOR WEEKS NOW! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

OKAY, IF YOU MUST KNOW! YOU DRIVE ME CRAZY! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT GIVES ME THE CREEPS!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT I WANT OUT! I HATE YOU—YOU AND THIS CRUMMY VASE YOU'RE ALWAYS FOOLING WITH! I'LL FIX BOTH OF YOU!

NO—DON'T!



C-CAUGHT IT! IF—IF YOU'D BROKEN IT— BUT YOU DIDN'T! AND NOW, GWEN, I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A LESSON! HA-HA!



TRY TO BREAK MY PRECIOUS VASE, EH? LET'S SEE HOW STRONG YOUR SKULL IS!

NO—NO, JERRY!



THERE! JUST THE WAY I TOOK CARE OF THAT OAF, BILL TALBOT! AND I WON'T SUFFER A BIT—THE VASE WILL SEE TO THAT!

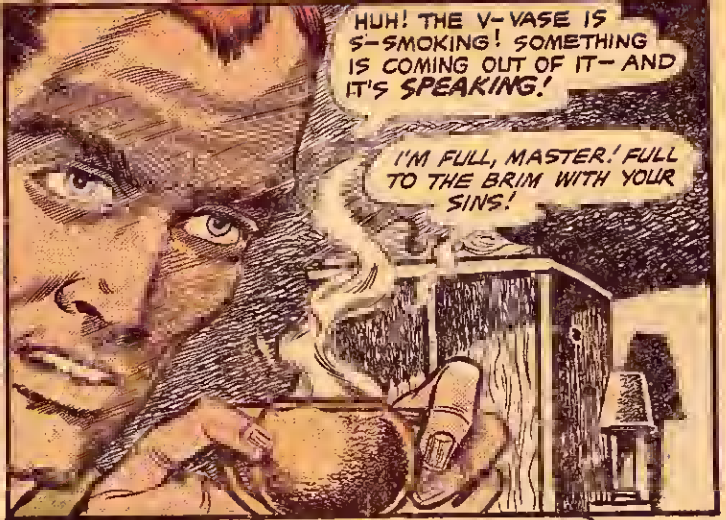


LISTEN, VASE! I JUST MURDERED MY GIRL! I'M NOT WORRIED BECAUSE I—(CHUCKLE)—KNOW YOU'LL TAKE IT OFF MY CONSCIENCE AND PROTECT ME!



**M**ORE YEARS PASS AND ONE NIGHT JERRY HURRIES HOME WITH A NEW CRIME TO CONFESS...

UGH— THIS ONE TONIGHT WAS ESPECIALLY GRUESOME! EVEN FOR A MAN WITH NO CONSCIENCE! BUT I'LL FEEL BETTER AS SOON AS I WHISPER IN THE VASE!



HUH! THE V-VASE IS S-SMOKING! SOMETHING IS COMING OUT OF IT— AND IT'S SPEAKING!

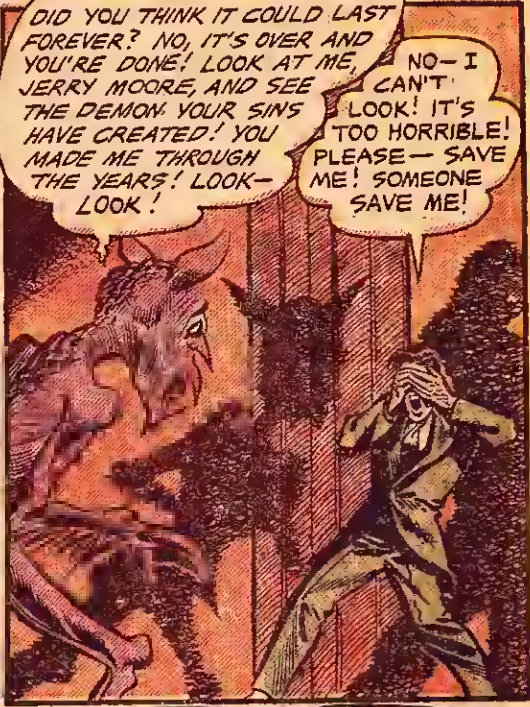
I'M FULL, MASTER! FULL TO THE BRIM WITH YOUR SINS!

HEH-HEH! YOUR SINS, MASTER! WHAT ELSE? HO-HO-HO!

DID YOU THINK IT COULD LAST FOREVER? NO, IT'S OVER AND YOU'RE DONE! LOOK AT ME, JERRY MOORE, AND SEE THE DEMON YOUR SINS HAVE CREATED! YOU MADE ME THROUGH THE YEARS! LOOK— LOOK!

NO— I CAN'T LOOK! IT'S TOO HORRIBLE! PLEASE— SAVE ME! SOMEONE SAVE ME!

YIIIIII— WHAT ARE YOU?

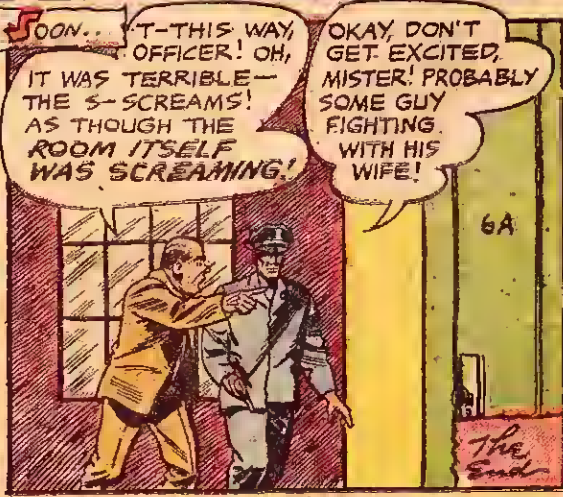
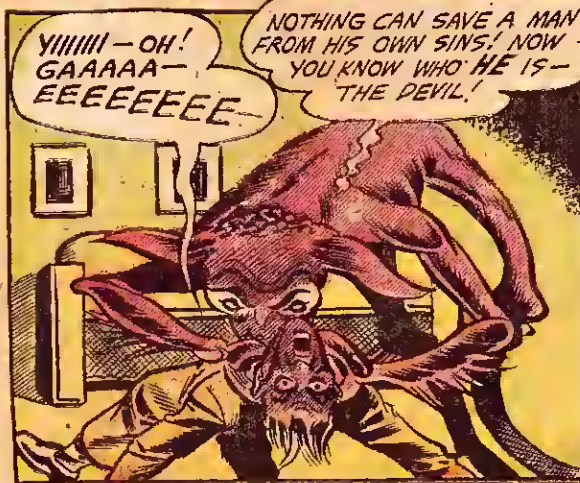


YIIIIII— OH! GAAAAA— EEEEEEEE—

NOTHING CAN SAVE A MAN FROM HIS OWN SINS! NOW YOU KNOW WHO HE IS— THE DEVIL!

SOON... T-THIS WAY, OFFICER! OH, IT WAS TERRIBLE— THE S-SCREAMS! AS THOUGH THE ROOM ITSELF WAS SCREAMING!

OKAY, DON'T GET EXCITED, MISTER! PROBABLY SOME GUY FIGHTING WITH HIS WIFE!





# GODDESS OF VENGEANCE

by John Martin

**T**HE SCREAM of sheer agony cut through the large, domed room like a jagged sword. Then another came, followed by low, muted sobbing.

Behind the vast altar, dim, sultry lights hidden in sconces cast a blood-red, brooding illumination from end to end of the dome.

In the glow, the image of Kali, goddess of vengeance, of murder, of blood, of killing for the sake of killing, cast inscrutable cruel eyes over the dark-robed celebrants before her.

George Trowbridge shuddered; behind the mask he wore, a look of horror came over his face. He'd bargained for this; yes, money was worth any price — particularly if someone else paid. But punishment like this . . .

The man beside him stirred.

"You seem disturbed, Trowbridge," he whispered.

"I am," the other replied. "I—I know the poor wretch deserves what he's getting, but . . ."

"Mother Kali demands obedience in return for the gold she helps us earn in the world of finance," the other continued. "It is a small price to pay. A little blood, a pound of flesh . . ."

"That's no pound of flesh; that's a human being," Trowbridge shivered.

"Aye, but he joined The Crooked Circle of his own free will. He knew that Mother Kali would demand, sooner or later, whatever of his that would please her. He swore to surrender his most precious possession, whatever it was, in return for the magic of Kali's help." The man grunted, indicated the writhing, tortured wretch on the altar before Kali. "He's lived well in five years. Lived on the fat of the land, as have we all. When Kali demanded his wife's life, her blood, he refused!"

"But the punishment! It's cruel, painful, too much so!" Trowbridge protested hoarsely.

"His wife would have suffered no pain," the other said, his blank mask seeming to grin in the gloom. "Mother Kali is merciful in some ways. She would have gathered his wife to her bosom in the blessed sleep of forgetfulness. Of course the woman would have died, but . . ."

A final scream stabbed through the temple room. Then the robed priest's red-hot knife rose slowly. It fell swiftly. There came a hideous gasp for breath as the bound body arched toward the dome in a futile effort to escape. A shattering gong boomed the end of the ceremony.

**A**S TROWBRIDGE turned to go he glanced at the Goddess. Did she seem to smile secretly? Was it a trick of the lights that gave the stone eyes sinister life? Of course it was, he decided suddenly. He'd been a fool to believe the stories of the Crooked Circle, listen to the promises of luck should he throw in his lot with Kali, pledge solemnly to surrender, at some future time, what was most precious to him. True, he reminded himself, his affairs had prospered since he had entered the Circle some three years before, prospered beyond his wildest dreams.

But that, he thought, as he divested himself of his robes in the outer chambers, might well have been luck. He had yet to see any real manifestation of the power of the goddess. The temple, set in the cellar of a big old mansion on the city's outskirts, had been built with the labor of men, not magic. The image itself, reputed to have come from India, was simply stone. The rituals, the punishments, after all, were accomplished by the hands and souls of men, beasts, of course, as men could be, but with the outer mark of the tribe of Adam.

Silently, one by one, the worshippers drifted outside to the luxurious, well-guarded grounds. Trowbridge got into his car, started the motor.

An hour's drive brought him to the great bridge over the river into the city. He'd been thinking all the while. Sooner or later, he knew, Kali would demand her price.

His eyes fixed on the city's lights, Trowbridge felt a hideous chill of fear run through him. He knew he was not prepared to pay the price. It was too great.

Then, suddenly, he smiled.

He knew a way to cheat the Circle.

What easier way than to write the police, expose the whole ring? There was nothing, no paper, no single shred of evidence to connect him with the group. For that matter



it would be difficult for the police themselves to fasten any kind of guilt on any of the other members. But he could expose the location of the hidden temple, inform the police at some time when the group was to assemble, simply stay away himself.

The law would smash the Circle, destroy its power, imprison its members. Some would try to expose him, but there would be no evidence. He would not have been at the temple. And perhaps — he smiled to himself smugly — there might be a reward.

In the meanwhile, he knew, he looked forward to seeing his baby. Ron was at home, in his crib, attended by a nurse since his wife had died of heart failure, at birth time.

An hour later he was gazing down at his child. Ron slept peacefully, a smiling little bundle of happiness.

"They won't get you," he whispered softly. "I won't let them."

In his study he took up pen and paper, wrote to the police. A week hence, he knew, the Circle would gather again at the Temple, this time to worship Kali, to invoke her blessing, to beg her to smile upon them with more golden fortune. In the letter he told the police all about the Circle, its promises, its rituals, its murders, gave the date of the meeting. They would raid the temple, he knew, find the bodies of the goddess's slain victims beneath the floor of the domed vault. He smiled, signing the letter with the words: *A Friend Who Knows*. Yes, he thought, there would be plenty of evidence after all. The whole Crooked Circle might hang — all except himself, of course. For he would not be there. And no shred of evidence could lead to him. Then he posted the letter.

The following night, a knock sounded at the door of the house. It was nearing midnight. The servants, the nursemaid, had been in bed for hours. The interruption startled him in the midst of a nightcap drink. He went down to the door, his heart pounding. Surely, he thought, it could not be the police! He had covered his tracks too well. How could they trace an anonymous letter?

**T**ROWBRIDGE opened the door and drew a breath of relief. The three men on the doorstep wore no uniforms. The next instant he gasped in horror as the first of them gave the secret sign of the Crooked Circle. He fell back before them as they advanced, silent, fled ahead of them to the study. They followed, remorseless.

"You are a traitor!" the first intruder said, throwing a letter on Trowbridge's desk. Trowbridge went white. It was the letter he had sent to the police. "You did not know, of course," the other went on, "that the high police official to whom you sent this was a member of the Circle. A file of handwriting at the Temple enabled him to trace you. That is why we are here!"

Trowbridge shrank back, trembling. He was thinking of Kali's punishment, of what lay in store for him now. The other drew a gun.

"Get the child. He's in the next room!" he ordered one of the others. "Wrap it in a blanket. Make no noise!"

"No—no!" Trowbridge croaked hoarsely. "Not—not the baby!"

"Kali shall punish you both for your transgression," the other said, smiling evilly. "First, we shall take your baby to silence you, then bring it up as a priest of the Circle, deprave its soul utterly. Then—there is another punishment . . ." The man paused as his confederate returned with the sleeping Ron. The third man laid a bundle he carried on a chair, unwrapped it. A gasp of horror burst from Trowbridge's lips as he saw what it contained — a monstrous spider. His blood froze as he saw it begin to alter its shape.

"Mother Kali sends you this to replace your child," the first man said, sardonically. His eyes swung to the giant spider, watched it metamorphose slowly into a perfect replica of Ron. "You will not abandon it, Trowbridge, you dare not. Any untoward word or act from you and your true son dies! You will live with this changeling, year after year, knowing it is not your son, but a creature of Kali, knowing that some day, Kali will exact on your body her final vengeance!"

"Final—final vengeance?" Trowbridge quavered. He gazed at the monster hiding in the guise of his own son. It was exactly like Ron. He knew he could say nothing, to anyone. He would be branded mad.

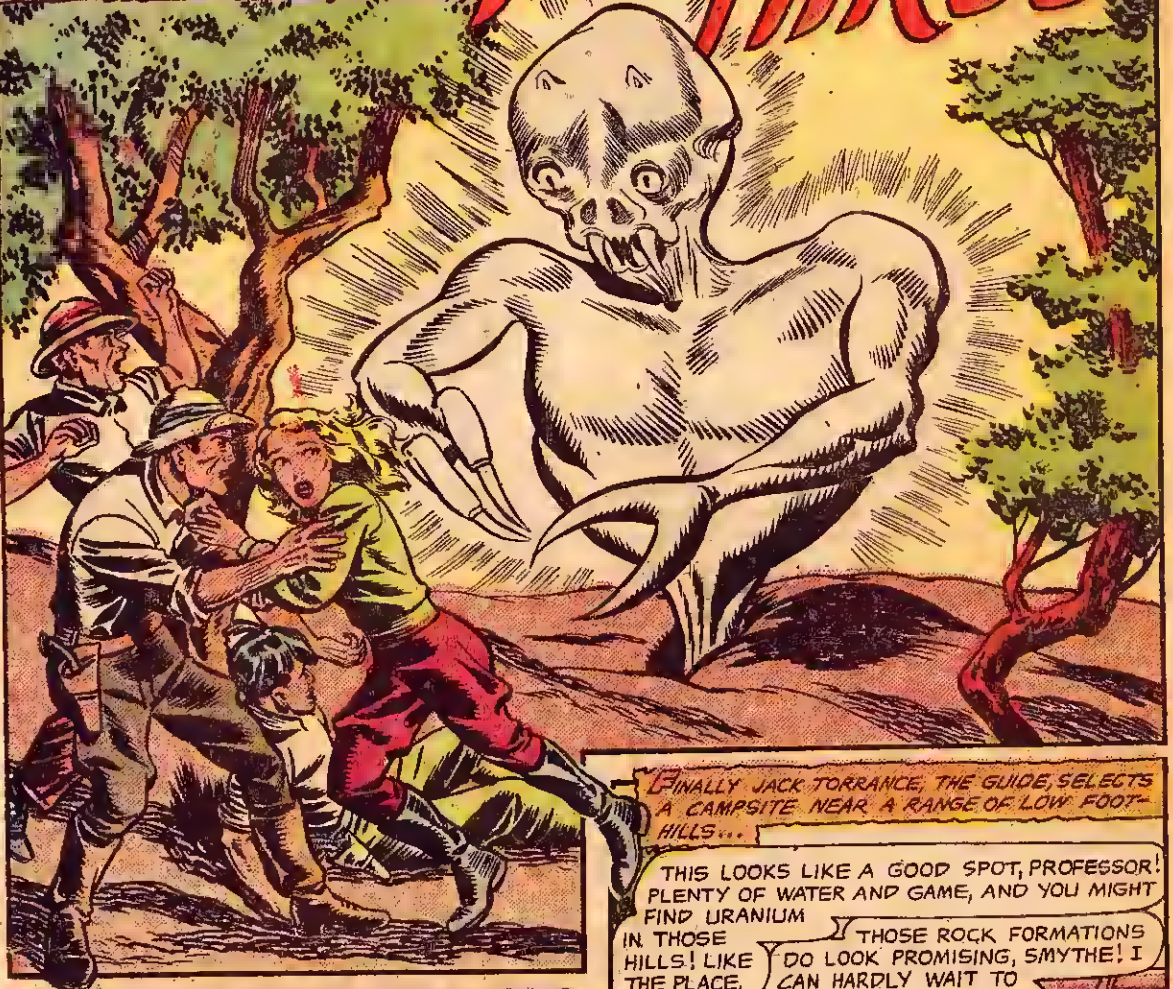
"Vengeance," the other said slowly. "For on the day it has grown to manhood it will resume its true shape, sacrifice you to Kali between its claws of death! Come!" All three turned, went out, carrying the blanket-wrapped, sleeping Ron.

Trowbridge began to laugh. His wild, insane mirth rose higher and higher. He was remembering the sly, secret smile of Kali, of the vengeance-goddess he had thought was just a lump of stone.



THE URANIUM RUSH WAS ON, AND FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TREASURE SEEKERS INVADED THE DARK CONTINENT—AFRICA! TO THE DEADLY THROB OF VOODOO DRUMS, AND THE STEALTHY TREAD OF MAN-EATING BEASTS, THEY SOUGHT THE NEW WEALTH THAT COULD BLOW UP THE WORLD! SOME OF THEM FOUND RICHES, SOME FOUND DEATH, BUT THE UNLUCKIEST OF ALL FOUND THE URANIUM BEASTS...

# MONSTERS THREE



FINALLY JACK TORRANCE, THE GUIDE, SELECTS A CAMPSITE NEAR A RANGE OF LOW FOOT-HILLS...

THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD SPOT, PROFESSOR! PLENTY OF WATER AND GAME, AND YOU MIGHT FIND URANIUM

IN THOSE HILLS! LIKE THE PLACE, PAT?

THOSE ROCK FORMATIONS DO LOOK PROMISING, SMYTHE! I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET IN THERE WITH A GEIGER COUNTER!

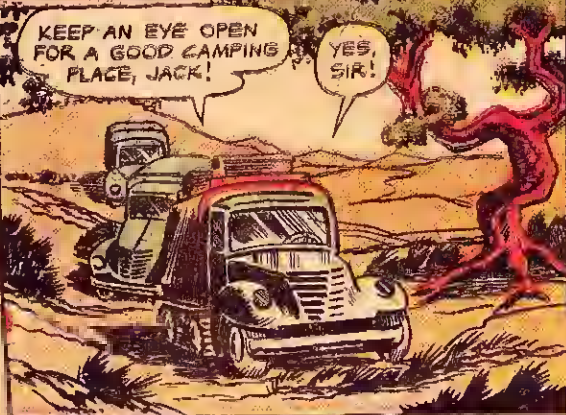
LOVELY!

TOMORROW WILL BE SOON ENOUGH, HAWKS!

THE URANIUM PROSPECTING PARTY OF PROFESSOR JEDFORD SMYTHE MOVES ACROSS THE VAST AFRICAN VELD.

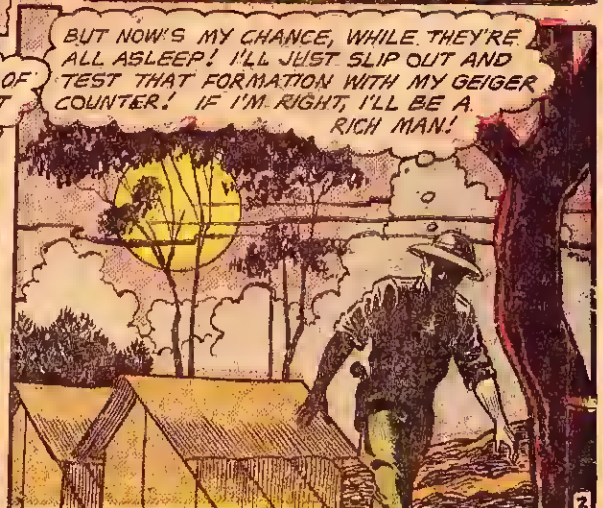
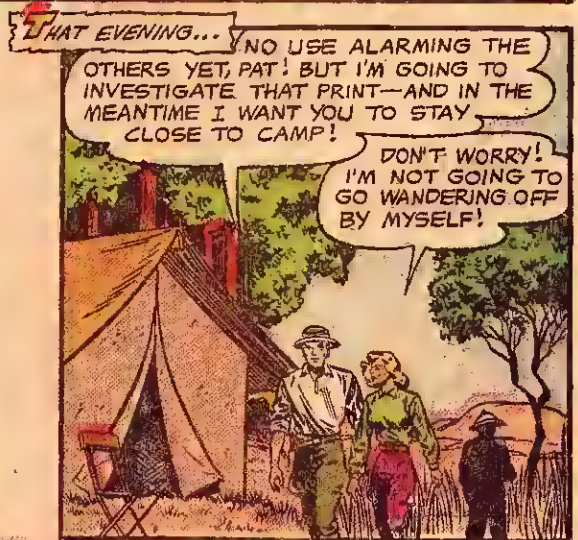
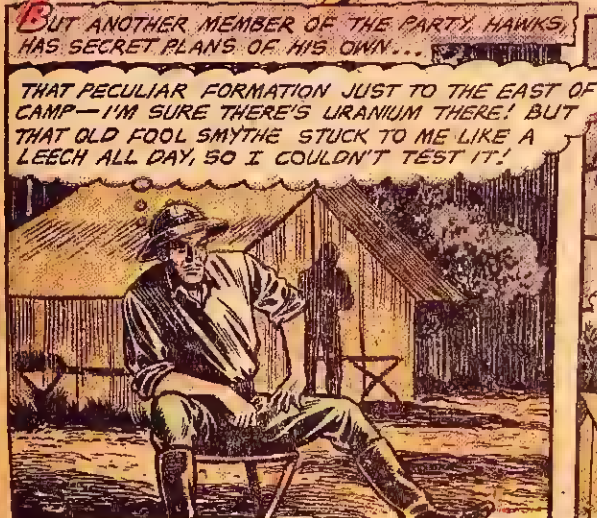
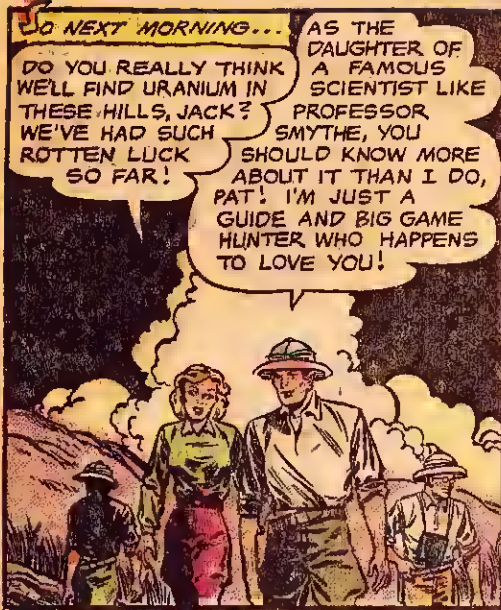
KEEP AN EYE OPEN FOR A GOOD CAMPING PLACE, JACK!

YES, SIR!





# MYSTERIES





## MYSTERIES

AFTER ALL, I DON'T HAVE TO REVEAL WHAT I FIND TO SMYTHE! THE SPOT IS SO CLOSE TO CAMP THAT HE'S BOUND TO OVERLOOK IT. IF THE ROCK IS URANIUM-BEARING, I CAN COME BACK LATER AND STAKE MY CLAIM!

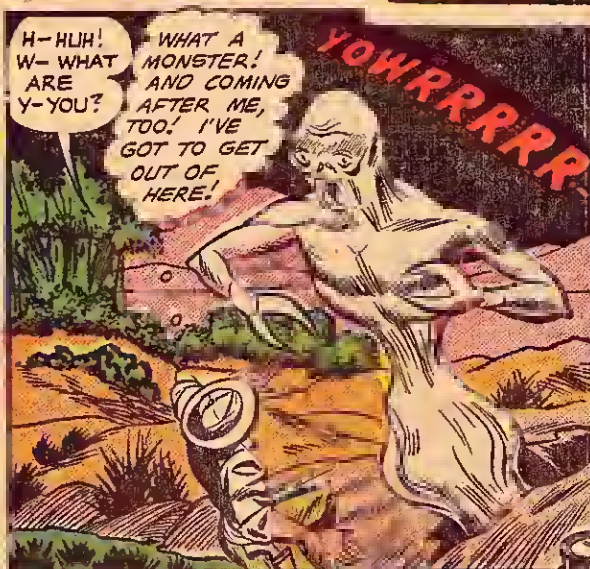
**SUDDOENLY...** **I WAS RIGHT!**  
**THE GEIGER**  
**COUNTER IS REACTING STRONGLY!**  
**THERE MUST BE A LARGE**  
**DEPOSIT OF URANIUM DIRECTLY**  
**BENEATH ME!**

B-BUT WHAT IS THAT? SOMETHING C-COMING OUT OF THAT FISSURE IN THE GROUND—SMOKE OR MIST! AND IT'S BEGINNING TO FORM INTO SOMETHING ELSE...



H-HUH!  
W-WHAT  
ARE  
Y-YOU?

WHAT A  
MONSTER!  
AND COMING  
AFTER ME,  
TOO! I'VE  
GOT TO GET  
OUT OF  
HERE!



IT W-WANTS  
TO KILL ME!  
**HELP!** PLEASE,  
SOMEBODY, **HELP!**  
D-DON'T LET THIS  
HORROR GET ME!  
**HELP ME!**

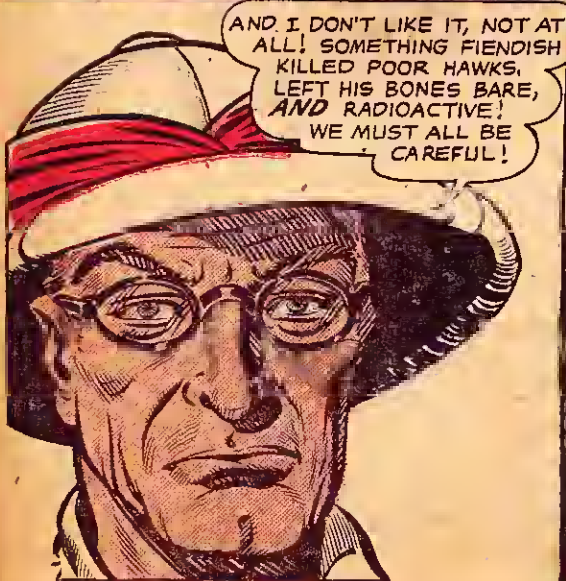
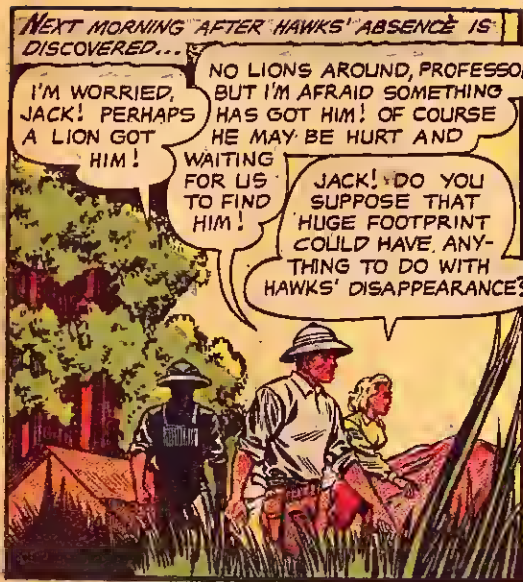
ARRRRR-  
GAREEE-  
RRRR



**YAAA—IT'S  
GOT ME! NO—  
DON'T! PLEASE—  
YIIIIIIIIIII**



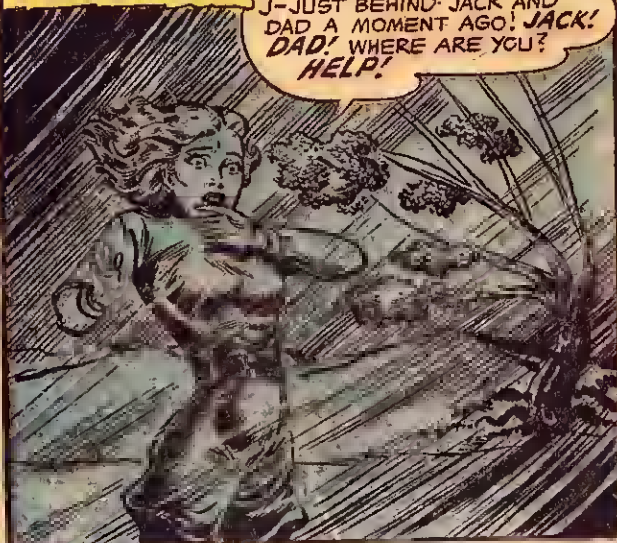






**M**OMENTS LATER AS THE STORM BURSTS IN ALL ITS FURY...

OHH—I—I CAN'T SEE A YARD IN FRONT OF ME! BUT I C-CAN'T BE LOST—I WAS J-JUST BEHIND JACK AND DAD A MOMENT AGO! JACK! DAD! WHERE ARE YOU? **HELP!**



UGH! SOMETHING C-COMING OUT OF THE GROUND! WHY—IT LOOKS LIKE A SMALL ATOMIC EXPLOSION! AND IT'S BEGINNING TO CHANGE...



RORRR—GARRRR—  
ARRHHHHH—

HEAVENS, WHAT A MONSTER! **HELP!**  
DAD, JACK! SAVE ME!  
EEEEEEEE—



PAT! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE SAFE! BUT THAT— THAT THING BEHIND YOU! IT MUST BE THE SAME THAT KILLED HAWKS!

H—HORRIBLE! IT CAME OUT OF THE GROUND AND STARTED AFTER ME!

ARRGGG—



LOOK, ANOTHER EXPLOSION! AND ANOTHER OVER THERE!

THEY'LL CHANGE INTO M-MONSTERS IN A MINUTE! OH, LET'S GET OUT OF THIS TERRIBLE PLACE!

IF WE CAN! THEY'RE ALL AROUND US NOW! AND I CAN SMELL THE RADIOACTIVITY IN THE AIR!

RADIOACTIVITY! MY GEIGER COUNTER! I MUST GET IT AND RUN A TEST! THESE— BEASTS ARE CONNECTED WITH URANIUM IN SOME WAY—I'M SURE OF IT!

COME BACK!

**B**UT THE URANIUM BEASTS CLOSE IN...

AAAAA— NO— THEY'RE TEARING ME APART! **HELP! YAAAAA—**

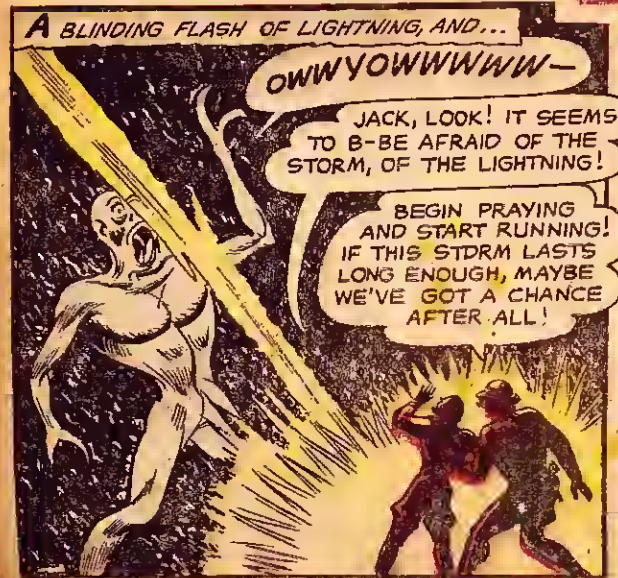
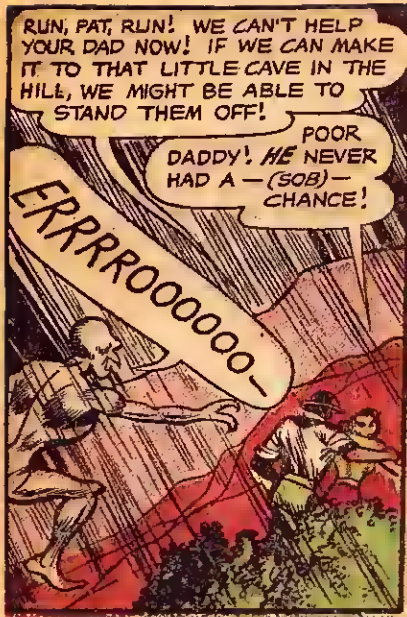
RRRGGG—

ARGGGGGGG—





# MYSTERIES





THUNDER CRASHES AND LIGHTNING STRIKES LIKE A GREAT YELLOW SERPENT...

YOU WERE RIGHT, JACK! THE MONSTER IS IN DEADLY FEAR OF THOSE LIGHTNING BOLTS!

YOWRRRRR-

AND WE'RE IN WORSE DANGER THAN EVER! IF THAT THING IS MADE OF URANIUM AND THE LIGHTNING STRIKES IT...



THERE IS A ROAR OF EXPLODING UNIVERSES, THE BRILLIANCE OF A THOUSAND SUNS, AND A CASCADE OF SMOKE RISING INTO THE TORN SKIES...



AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION! WE'RE D-DOOMED, JACK!

NOT YET! QUICK, INTO THE CAVE AND SHIELD YOUR EYES! WE MAY NOT GET THE FULL BLAST OF THE EXPLOSION!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT A GREAT BOLT SMASHES INTO THE UNCANNY FIGURE...

oooooooooooo-



THE BLAST, LIKE A GIANT HAND, PICKS UP THE COUPLE AND HURLS THEM BACK INTO THE BLACKNESS OF THE CAVE! AND THEN, WITH BURSTING EARDRUMS, A NEW DARKNESS BECKONS AND THEY FALL DOWN AND DOWN, SCREAMING WITH PRESSURE AND PAIN...



HOURS LATER...

EVEN THE CAVE WAS DESTROYED! I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND IT, BUT WHAT WHY WE'RE ALIVE, BUT WE ARE, I THINK!

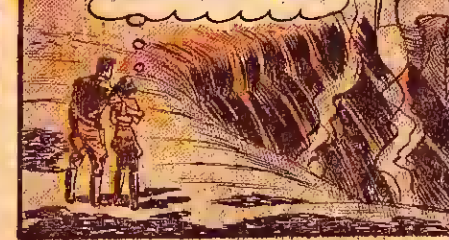
YES, JACK!

HE DOESN'T KNOW IS THAT WE'RE DOOMED, TOO, AS SURELY AS THE OTHERS!



WILL YOU LOOK AT THE COUNTRY AROUND HERE! UTTERLY DEVASTATED! THAT MONSTER WAS MADE OF URANIUM - HE WAS A WALKING BOMB!

HOW CAN I TELL HIM THAT THE TERRIBLE RADIOACTIVITY WILL KILL US BOTH IN A MATTER OF DAYS?



I-I WON'T TELL HIM! NOT YET! WE CAN HAVE A FEW HAPPY HOURS TOGETHER! WE'LL BE MARRIED AS SOON AS WE GET BACK TO DURBAN!

LET'S START THE LONG TREK, HONEY! GUESS I HAVE TO LOOK AFTER YOU FROM NOW ON!

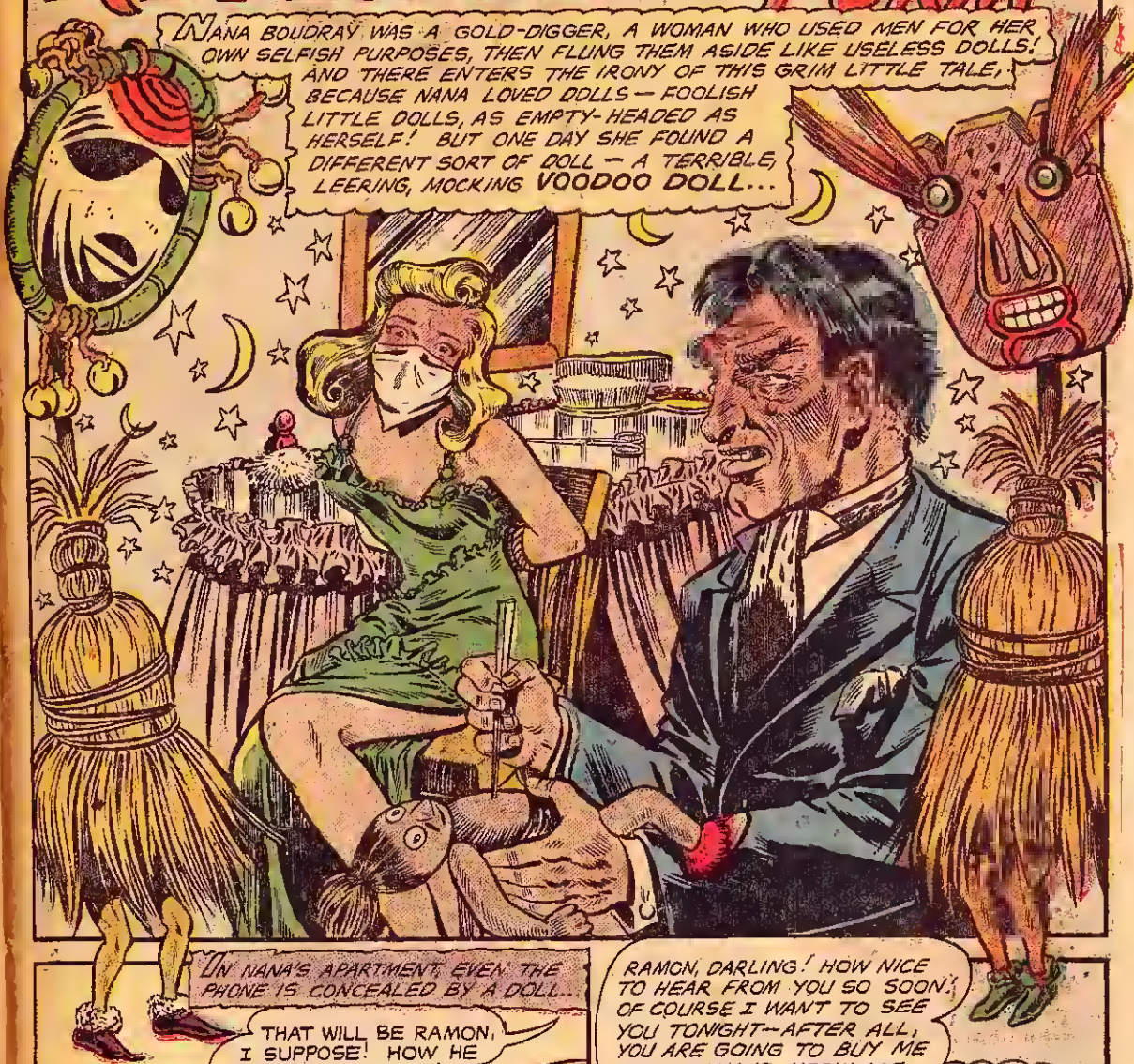


THE END



# REVENGE in SMALL FORM

NANA BOUDRAY WAS A GOLD-DIGGER, A WOMAN WHO USED MEN FOR HER OWN SELFISH PURPOSES, THEN FLUNG THEM ASIDE LIKE USELESS DOLLS. AND THERE ENTERS THE IRONY OF THIS GRIM LITTLE TALE, BECAUSE NANA LOVED DOLLS—FOOLISH LITTLE DOLLS, AS EMPTY-HEADED AS HERSELF! BUT ONE DAY SHE FOUND A DIFFERENT SORT OF DOLL—A TERRIBLE, LEERING, MOCKING VOODOO DOLL...

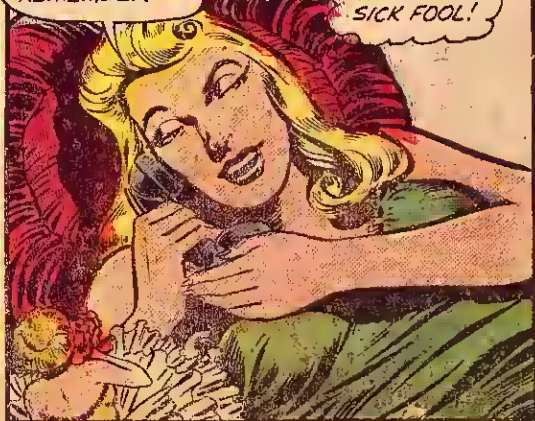


IN NANA'S APARTMENT, EVEN THE PHONE IS CONCEALED BY A DOLL...

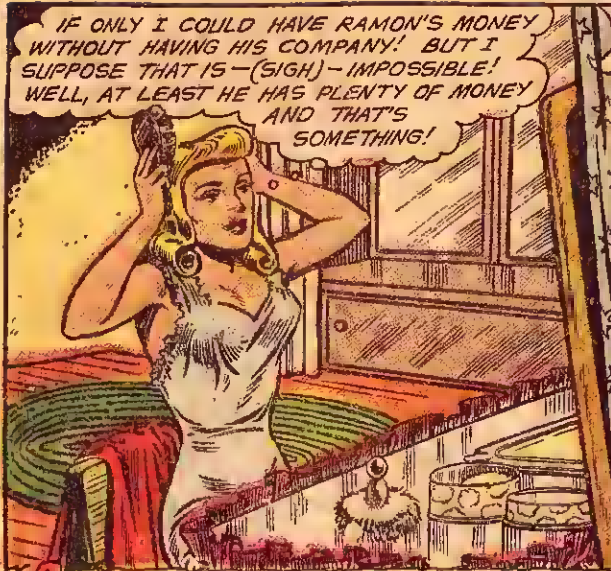
THAT WILL BE RAMON, I SUPPOSE! HOW HE BORES ME LATELY!

RAMON, DARLING! HOW NICE TO HEAR FROM YOU SO SOON! OF COURSE I WANT TO SEE YOU TONIGHT—AFTER ALL, YOU ARE GOING TO BUY ME THAT DIAMOND NECKLACE, REMEMBER?

THE LOVE-SICK FOOL!





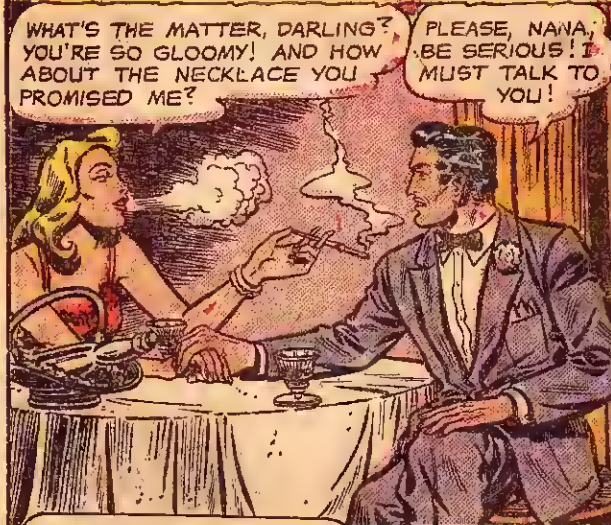


IF ONLY I COULD HAVE RAMON'S MONEY WITHOUT HAVING HIS COMPANY! BUT I SUPPOSE THAT IS—(SIGH)—IMPOSSIBLE! WELL, AT LEAST HE HAS PLENTY OF MONEY AND THAT'S SOMETHING!



HE PROMISED ME A DIAMOND NECKLACE, BUT I WONDER IF I COULD GET HIM TO GIVE ME ONE OF HIS COFFEE PLANTATIONS AS WELL! HE WOULD NEVER MISS JUST ONE!

BUT THAT NIGHT, RAMON'S MANNER IS PECULIAR...



WHAT'S THE MATTER, DARLING? YOU'RE SO GLOOMY! AND HOW ABOUT THE NECKLACE YOU PROMISED ME?

PLEASE, NANA, BE SERIOUS! I MUST TALK TO YOU!



THE TRUTH IS—I'M BROKE! I'VE LOST EVERY DIME—EVEN HAD TO MORTGAGE MY PLANTATIONS! BUT I KNOW YOU LOVE ME, THAT IT WON'T MATTER!

WON'T MATTER! WHY, YOU FOOL!



BROKE! OF ALL THE NERVE, WASTING MY TIME! I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR STUPID FACE AGAIN!

NANA! COME BACK! YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT!



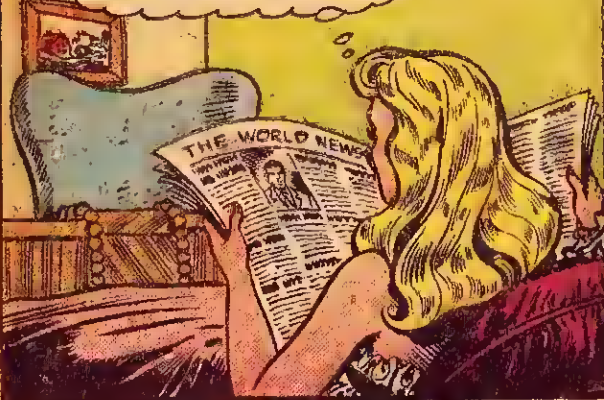
THAT NIGHT, RAMON MAKES CERTAIN PREPARATIONS...

THERE, IT'S DONE! NANA WILL GET THE 'PACKAGE,' AND I'LL BLOW OUT MY FOOLISH BRAINS!



**N**EXT MORNING, NANA READS OF THE TRAGEDY...

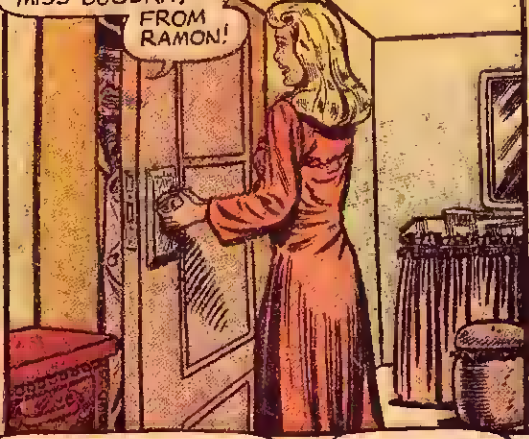
HMMM, SO THE POOR SAP SHOT HIMSELF, DID HE! WELL, I'M NOT TO BLAME! IT ISN'T MY FAULT THAT HE SQUANDERED ALL HIS MONEY! STILL, I WISH I'D GOTTEN THAT DIAMOND NECKLACE OUT OF HIM!



**A** FEW NIGHTS LATER...

YES? WHO IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

A PACKAGE FOR MISS BOUDRAY—FROM RAMON!



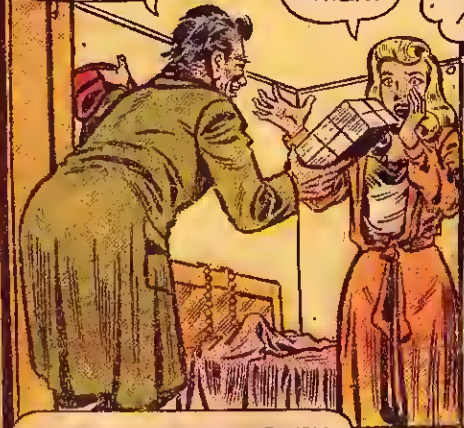
I WAS A FRIEND OF POOR RAMON! HIS LAST WISH WAS THAT I DELIVER THIS DOLL!

FOR ME! WELL, COME IN, THEN!

WHAT A WEIRD-LOOKING MAN!

RAMON TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE VERY FOND OF DOLLS, MISS BOUDRAY! HE WANTED YOU TO HAVE THIS ONE TO REMEMBER HIM BY!

A D-DOLL? I SUPPOSE IT'S ONE OF THOSE SILLY GESTURES HE WAS SO FOND OF!



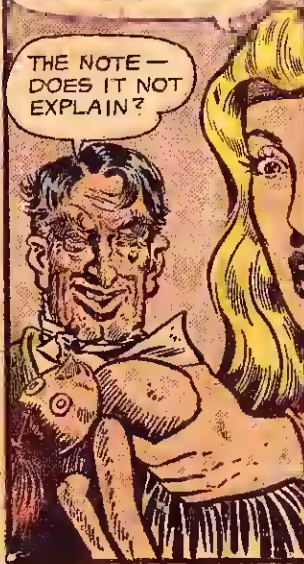
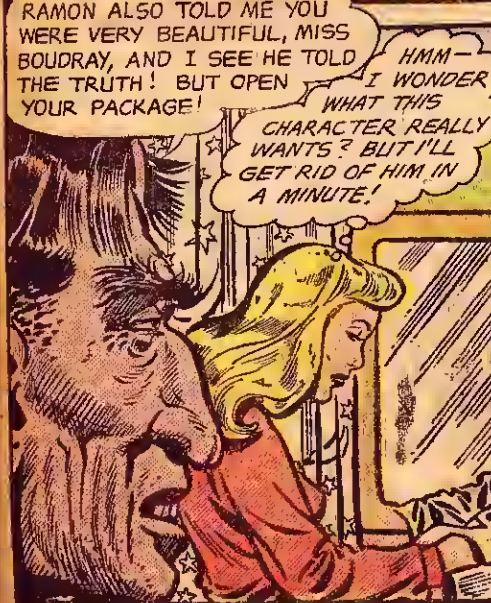
RAMON ALSO TOLD ME YOU WERE VERY BEAUTIFUL, MISS BOUDRAY, AND I SEE HE TOLD THE TRUTH! BUT OPEN YOUR PACKAGE!

HMM—I WONDER WHAT THIS CHARACTER REALLY WANTS? BUT I'LL GET RID OF HIM IN A MINUTE!

OH, WHAT A GROTESQUE LOOKING LITTLE DOLL! NOW WHY WOULD RAMON SEND ME A THING LIKE THIS?

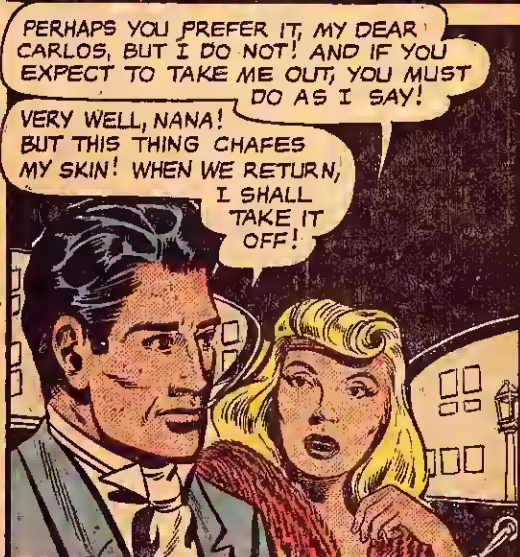
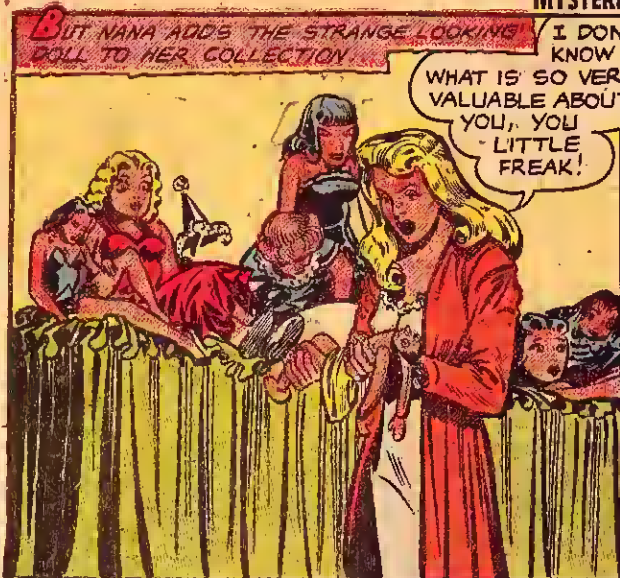
THE NOTE—DOES IT NOT EXPLAIN?

HOW ODD! HE SENDS ME THIS AS HIS PARTING GIFT! AND HE SAYS IT IS VERY VALUABLE—BUT HOW CAN THAT BE? IT IS ONLY RAGS AND STRAW!





MYSTERIES





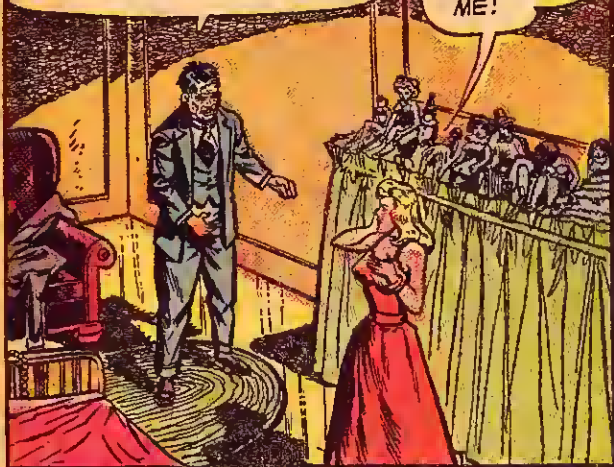
MYSTERIES

YOU ARE A CRUEL WOMAN, NANA! NO WONDER RAMON SHOT HIMSELF OVER YOU! BUT I AM ALSO A FOOL BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!

DON'T TALK ABOUT RAMON—AND STAY AWAY FROM ME!

BUT I ONLY WANT A KISS, A LITTLE TOKEN OF YOUR LOVE!

PERHAPS—LATER! I MUST CHANGE NOW!

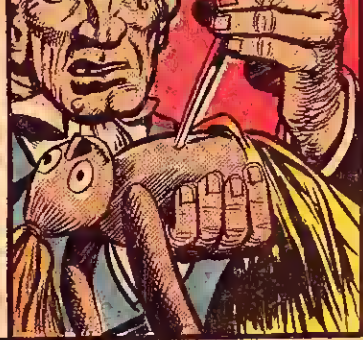
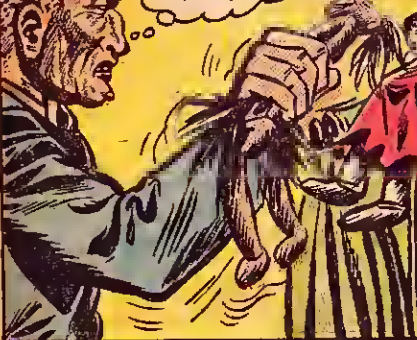


BUT AS NANA LEAVES THE ROOM...

SO, SHE SUSPECTS NOTHING OF MY REAL PURPOSE! SHE THINKS I AM ONLY ANOTHER FOOL, DANCING TO HER TUNE! BUT WE SHALL SHOW HER DIFFERENTLY, EH, DOLL?

THERE! THE FIRST PART OF RAMON'S REVENGE! I PIERCE THE DOLL WITH THIS NEEDLE!

EEEEEEEEEEEE—THE P-PAIN! MY HEAD—MY CHEST!



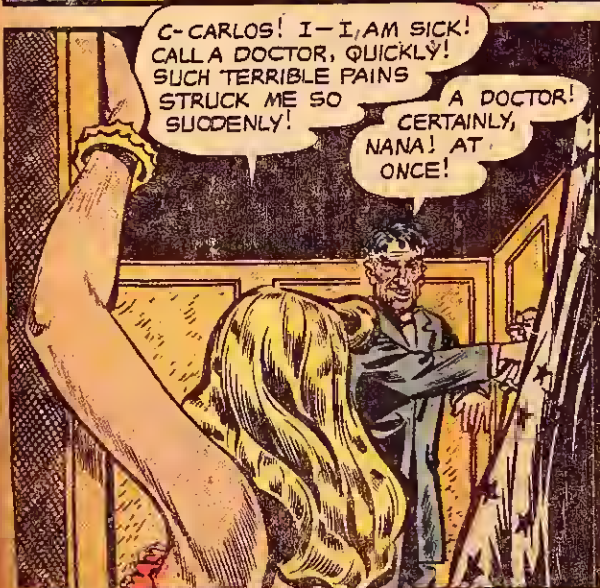
C-CARLOS! I—I, AM SICK! CALL A DOCTOR, QUICKLY! SUCH TERRIBLE PAINS STRUCK ME SO SUDDENLY!

A DOCTOR! CERTAINLY, NANA! AT ONCE!

But...

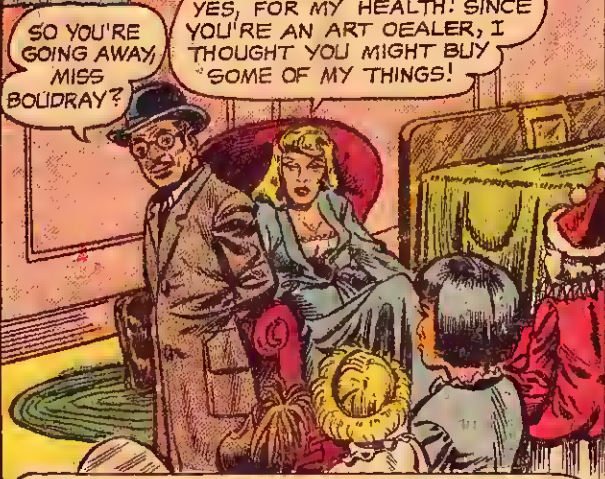
I CAN FIND NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU, MISS! YOU SEEM IN PERFECT HEALTH!

I DO FEEL BETTER NOW! THE PAINS HAVE GONE!





NOW WEEKS PASS AND NANA IS WRACKED BY THE STRANGE PAINS WHICH NO DOCTOR CAN CURE. FINALLY...

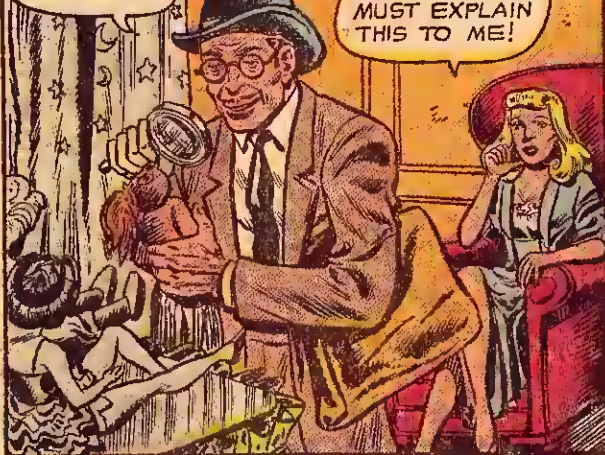


SO YOU'RE GOING AWAY, MISS BOUDRAY?

YES, FOR MY HEALTH! SINCE YOU'RE AN ART DEALER, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BUY SOME OF MY THINGS!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THIS IS A GENUINE VODOO DOLL, AS MADE BY THE NATIVES OF BRAZIL! THROUGH THIS DOLL THEY REVENGE THEMSELVES ON THEIR ENEMIES!

VOOOO! YOU MUST EXPLAIN THIS TO ME!



HMM - YOU REALLY HAVEN'T MUCH OF INTEREST TO ME! BUT WAIT A MINUTE - THIS ODD DOLL! VERY UNUSUAL!

THAT THING! WHY IT'S WORTHLESS! ONLY RAGS AND STRAW...

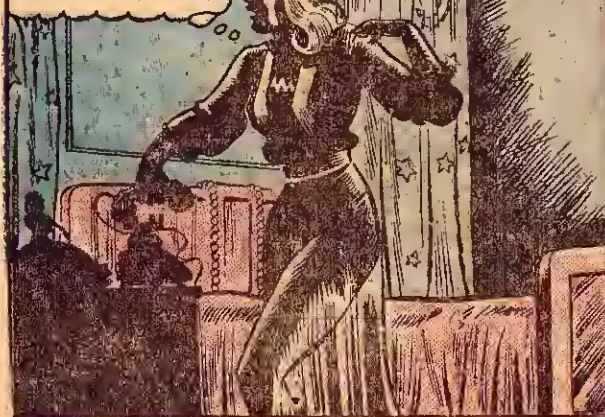


LATER... SO, YOU LITTLE MONSTER! A NEEDLE JABBED INTO YOU IS SUPPOSED TO CAUSE PAIN IN YOUR VICTIM! AND I HAVE BEEN HAVING TERRIBLE PAINS! I THINK I HAD BETTER MAKE A FEW PHONE CALLS!



AND AFTER THE PHONE CALLS...

WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN ALL THIS TIME! CARLOS IS RAMON'S BROTHER! AND THEY'RE BOTH FROM BRAZIL! THE VODOO DOLL IS AFTER ME!



THAT NIGHT...

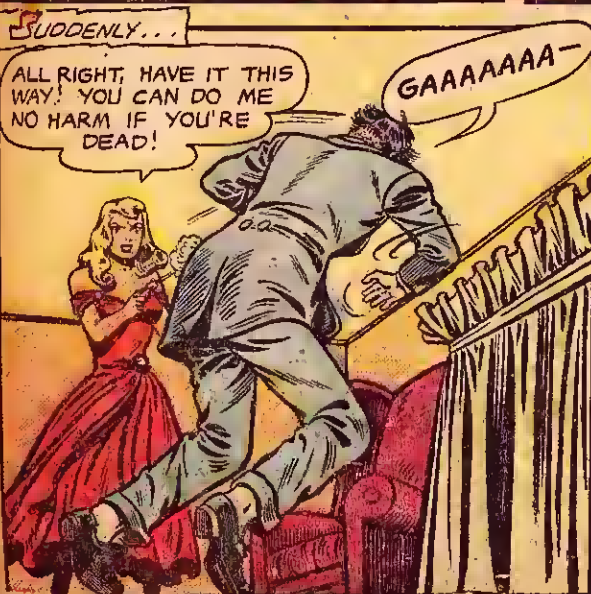
HELLO, NANA! READY TO GO OUT? I'M WEARING THIS CURSED MASK, YOU SEE!

COME IN, DEAR CARLOS! I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU THIS EVENING!





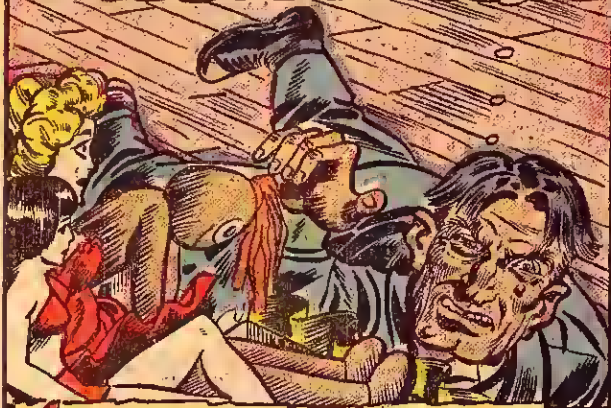
MYSTERIES





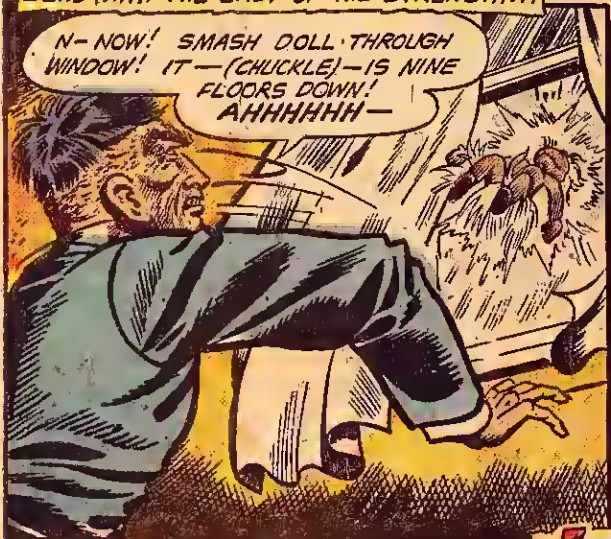
**N**ANA HAS OVERLOOKED JUST ONE THING—  
CARLOS IS NOT QUITE DEAD...

THE D-DOOR! I H-HEARD IT SLAM! SHE'S  
G-GONE, BUT IF I CAN—(GASP)—GET TO  
THE VOODOO DOLL— MUST GET TO DOLL!

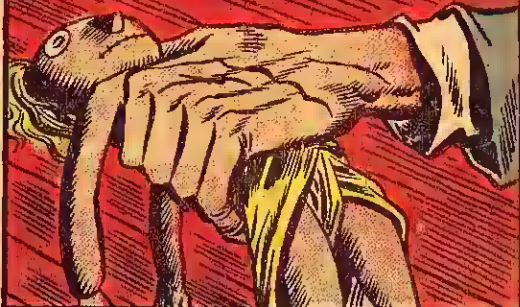


**A**ND, WITH THE LAST OF HIS STRENGTH...

N- NOW! SMASH DOLL THROUGH  
WINDOW! IT—(CHUCKLE)—IS NINE  
FLOORS DOWN! AHHHHHH—

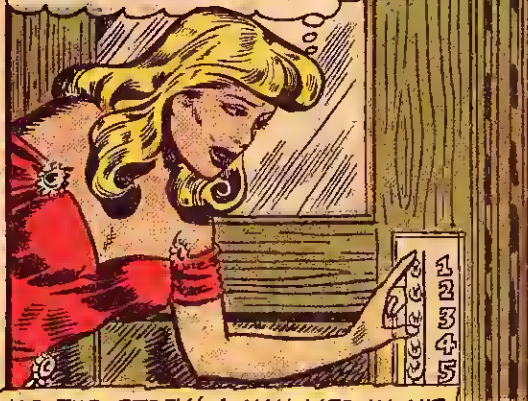


**A**ND... G-GOT IT! NOW MUST FIND  
THE WINDOW! I'M D-DYING—  
BLEEDING TO D-DEATH! BUT GOT TO  
GET TO WINDOW SOMEHOW! C-CAN'T  
LET HER GET AWAY! SHE'S EVIL—  
MUST DIE! W-WHERE IS  
WINDOW...



**W**HILE IN THE CORRIDOR...

WELL, AT LAST! I THOUGHT THE  
ELEVATOR WOULD NEVER COME! BUT  
IN A FEW MINUTES NOW I'LL BE  
SAFELY ON A PLANE!

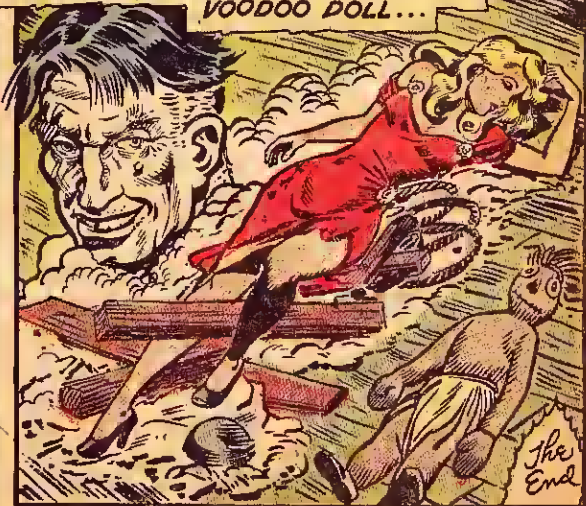


**S**UDDENLY...

THE ELEVATOR—FALLING!  
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE—



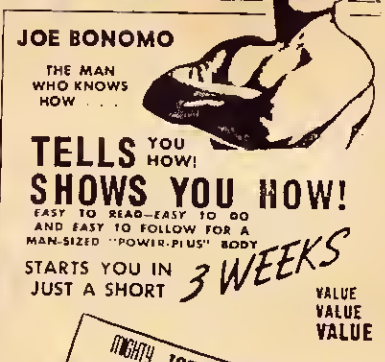
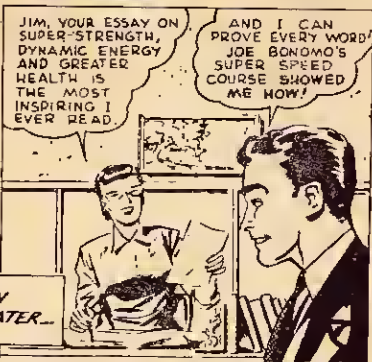
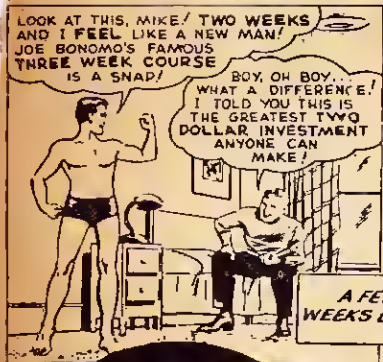
**S**O ENDS THE STORY! A MAN LIES IN HIS  
GRAVE; ANOTHER MAN WELTS IN HIS OWN  
BLOOD; A WOMAN IS CRUSHED IN AN ELEVATOR;  
AND ON THE PAVEMENT, UNHURT, IS THE  
VOODOO DOLL...



The  
End



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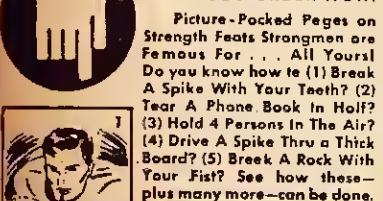
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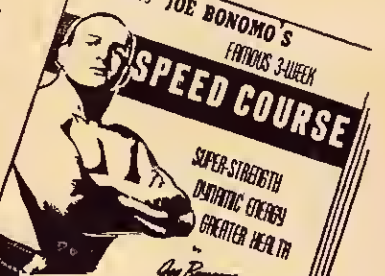
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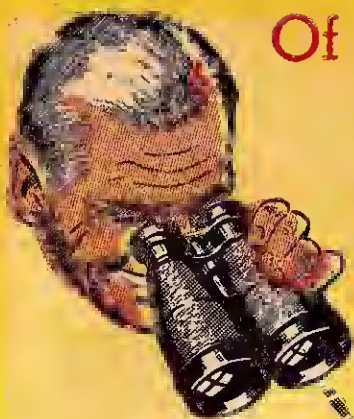
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